

Fatal Debilitation Through Flawed Crisis Management

UNSCOM: 1997-1998

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Junior officers in the U.S. military have a certain fascination with CNN. Once news of a U.S. military action breaks, these officers typically gather around television sets in their wardrooms, interested in seeing the results of their, or their fellow service members, handiwork, and, once the dust has settled, how it is perceived around the world. On January 16, 1991, and December 16, 1998, they were impressed with the accuracy and lethality of precision guided munitions. On both times, those members of the armed forces called to action by their Commander in Chief, had skillfully executed their assigned missions. At the beginning of the decade, the world had embraced them as United Nations sanctioned heroes for their role in liberating Kuwait from an aggressive neighbor; in the latter attack, they received strong support from their countrymen and British allies, but were largely questioned or condemned by world opinion. Rather than seeing their actions culminate in a victory parade in Washington, D.C., they watched a leader flagrantly defy the UN and claim victory. Now they wonder the status of his chemical, biological, nuclear and missile programs after years of deceit and over two years without any monitoring.¹ How could such a fate befall those who compose the military might behind the world's only superpower? The answer lies in the gulf between U.S. strategic objectives and the application of the means chosen to pursue them.

Success in any realm is determined by one's definition of success. If you do not know where you want to go, how will you know how to get there, or even when you are there? Thus, the first step in obtaining a desired outcome is to define exactly that, the desired outcome. Once that is known, then the best method to achieve such an outcome can be formulated. But before the best route can be identified, a traveler needs to understand the environment through which he or she would be traveling. Distance, terrain, seasons,

¹ Author's observation

weather, physical condition of the road, mechanical ability of the car, prospects for criminal or military violence, locations of gas stations, restaurants and hotels, presence of other optional routes, and perhaps even scenery, would all play a factor in making a well informed decision. If the traveler's main goal was to complete the journey in as little time as possible, a slightly longer, but mostly flat route around some mountains, could present a better option than a shorter, but winding mountainous road. In a similar manner, individuals plotting a nation's course of action during an international crisis would largely increase their chances of success by knowing the desired outcome, understanding the situation in which the events were occurring in, and constantly monitoring the situation to be able to recognize any changes which could be capitalized upon through strategic re-evaluations.

Such an assessment of U.S. policy and strategy in Southwest Asia was lacking by 1997, as the 1997-98 United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) weapons inspection crises revealed a disjointed, unadapting effort at coercive diplomacy by the Clinton administration. By issuing demands which were less than stated strategic goals, failing to adequately threaten something which the Iraqi government held dear, not offering an incentive for cooperation, not maintaining sufficient international support to sustain an inflexible policy, and by failing to dominate the escalatory ladder, U.S. policy on Iraq in the late 1990's was largely predisposed to failure. Examining the changes from Saddam Hussein's weakest moments in 1996 to the Anglo-American air strikes of December 1998, in terms of the evolving role which force, intelligence, diplomacy, pertinent decisions makers and the media played in the dynamic environment surrounding these crises, will reveal that the Clinton administration chose the wrong tool

to accomplish its stated policy, misapplied that tool, and failed to adapt to a changing environment.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT: SUCCESS AND FAILURE

The crisis management method chosen by the Clinton administration to counter Iraq's challenges to its containment policy was largely focused on a coercive diplomatic effort backed by an active U.S. military presence in Southwest Asia in an attempt to compel Hussein to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 687. One of the inherent difficulties in choosing a course of action relying upon compellence instead of deterrence, is that, by definition, your success is determined by coercing an entity to undertake a certain action rather than simply not act.² This significantly reduces the chances of success for a policy based on compellence, for, when compared to deterrence, it necessitates a larger amount of effort on the entity attempting to effect the compellence. For the Clinton administration, success could not only come from Iraq abiding by Resolution 687, namely the complete and accurate verification and on going monitoring of the Iraqi WMD program and the accounting for all Kuwaiti citizens who remain unaccounted for in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, but also the elimination of human rights violations against Iraq's Kurds and Shia Marsh Arabs, rather than Iraq not acting aggressively toward other states.

Using similar logic, the southern states in the U.S. Civil War could claim a victory as a Confederacy merely by declaring independence in a speech; the northern states would

² Dr. Robert Pfaltzgraff, Professor, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, September 26, 2000.

have to persuade or force the South to rescind their secession, in order to achieve their stated goal of maintaining the Union.

Successful coercive diplomatic efforts have been distinguished by four characteristics, namely: (1) making a demand to your opponent, (2) creating a sense of urgency to comply with your demand, (3) threatening a potent and credible punishment to your opponent for non-compliance and (4) offering positive inducements for compellence.³ These four characteristics will be applied to the Clinton administration's crisis management effort during the 1997-98 UNSCOM crises in order to determine its success or failure and the reasons for such a result.

In a manner similar to his predecessor, Clinton pursued his coercive diplomatic strategy in the name of the United Nations, in order to give it the legitimacy associated with that international body's capacity to establish international authority. Therefore, underlying all of the previously mentioned four characteristics is a need to maintain UN support behind all of them. Without such support, the U.S. could find itself acting alone, with the President having to justify any unilateral actions to the international community and his domestic constituency.

Stating the criteria for the success of coercive diplomacy also calls to mind conditions for its failure. Since it is composed of four elements, an obvious strategy to counter it would be to treat each element as a leg on a table and then attempt to knock out as many legs as possible to upset the entire policy. This could be done by elongating the crisis in order to dissolve a sense of urgency and drain an opponent's will, or to show yourself immune to, or able to counter, the threatened punishment. This policy could also be

³ Ibid.

upset by countering it with your own demands and threats in hopes that your opponent would back down, the development of a brilliant circumventing move which avoids direct confrontation, linking it to something else in order to alter its scope, or undermining your opponent's ability, authority and or will to carry out such a threat.

Having failed to disrupt the 1990-91 military coalition against it by linking the removal of its troops from Kuwait to the larger Palestinian issue or to show credibility in its counter threat of producing the 'Mother of all Battles,' Iraq successfully implemented a strategy during the 1997-98 UNSCOM crises of pulling the rug out from U.S. policy by disrupting the international political cohesion behind pursuing Resolution 687 and therefore denying U.S. policy the legitimacy of acting under the auspices of the UN Security Council.

One aspect of studying coercive diplomacy as an instrument of crisis management, is to identify why it was chosen and the overall policy in which it was exercised. One of the prime reasons behind Clinton's decision was that he inherited it as part of his predecessor's Iraqi policy. Although Clinton was able to defeat Bush in his re-election attempt in 1992 largely by characterizing him as being indifferent to a recent economic downturn, in winning the election with less than 50% of the popular vote, he did not bring a popular mandate with him to Washington. Nor as a previous governor did he bring any practical foreign policy experience. But after the fall of the Berlin Wall, collapse of the Soviet Union, the successful military action which drove Iraq out of Kuwait and the 1991 Madrid Conference on the Middle East, Bush could generate political capital by pointing to his numerous foreign policy successes. When Bush talked tough, or took strong action on foreign policy matters, his opinion poll approval ratings

sky-rocketed to the highest levels ever documented.⁴ Adopting his predecessor's successfully proven strategy and methods on Iraq seemed to present itself as a wise course of action for a new president without foreign policy credentials.

If coercive diplomacy were to be correctly applied, it would yield a win-win situation for Clinton. If he achieved Iraqi compliance, he would be seen as a tough talking foreign policy practitioner. If he were forced to follow up his threats with military action, then he would be seen domestically as having resolve in pursuing a popular and proven course of action. Success in either manner could allow him to inherit Bush's mantle of foreign policy leadership.

The seemingly successful Iraqi policy which Clinton inherited from Bush relied upon broadly containing Iraq through: 1) the economic sanctions authorized in Security Council Resolution 661 four days after Iraq's August 2, 1990, invasion of Kuwait, 2) enforcing northern and southern Iraq no-fly zones in the name of protecting Iraqi Kurds and Shia Muslims, respectively, from Saddam Hussein, 3) the capability to threaten military force and 4) disarming Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capability.⁵ While destroying Iraq's WMDs was not part of Security Council Resolution 678, which authorized the use of force in removing the Iraqi military from Kuwait, it was used domestically by President Bush to rally support for a military offensive, mentioned in the U.S. legislation which authorized DESERT STORM, included in the Iraq-Coalition cease-fire agreement at Safwan, Iraq, and then enshrined in the previously mentioned UN

⁴ Ann Devroy, "High Bush Approval Ratings Based on Foreign Policy," Washington Post, March 16, 1991, A4.

⁵ Patrick L. Clawson, ed., Iraq Strategy Review, (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998), 14.

Resolution 687.⁶ In light of discovering a domestic WMD production program which was much more developed than was anticipated before the Gulf War and Iraq's previous use of chemical weapons and ballistic missiles, this post-war expansion of war aims was embraced by the UN.

In order to deny Iraq the capability to unconventionally threaten its neighbors, UN Resolution 687 called for Iraq to declare to the UN all of its stockpile of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, i.e. WMDs, and all missiles with a range exceeding 150 kilometers, the components of these weapons and all associated means of production.⁷ But, as conquering and occupying Iraq went beyond the coalition's UN mandate to remove Iraq forces from Kuwait,⁸ the UN would have to rely upon a civilian body composed of individuals supplied from member states to verify the accuracy and completeness of the Iraqi declaration. They would also be charged with overseeing the destruction, rendering harmless, or removal of the previously listed items. This body was UNSCOM and it had responsibility for all chemical and biological weapons and the missile program. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was designated to investigate the nuclear weapons program. Later during 1991, under Resolution 715, its mission was expanded to include the ongoing monitoring of Iraq to ensure its continued compliance with its disarmament obligations.

But in stark contrast to previous international disarmament efforts, this was not an agreement between equal partners, but one that was dictated by a victorious army to a vanquished foe, and then mandated by the United Nations. Before the trust but verify

⁶ "The Gulf Crisis: Building a Coalition for War," Kennedy School of Government Case Program C16-94-1264.0, 29.

⁷ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 687, April 3, 1991.

⁸ Based on UN Resolutions 660, 661 and 678 and Articles 42 and 51 of the UN Charter.

aspect of arms control monitoring associated with U.S.-Soviet, and later Russian, accords could be reached, UNSCOM would need to verify the Iraqi weapons declarations as being accurate.

However, as early as June 1991, UN weapons inspectors in Iraq discovered equipment not listed on their April 1991 “full, final and complete disclosure” and began to discover a complex operation in which Iraq would attempt to maintain its WMD and ballistic missile capability.⁹ The discovery of World War II era uranium enriching calutrons prompted the UN Security Council to issue Resolution 707 which again called for Iraq to submit a “full, final and complete” declaration but did not include any punishment for its deception. Seeking a new course, Iraq unilaterally and covertly destroyed part of its WMD program in the latter part of that year and then in March 1992, declared that all items, records and components had been totally destroyed. Sanctions would continue and it would now be up to the inspectors to prove Iraq wrong.

Although U.S. aircraft attacked anti-aircraft missiles sites in southern Iraq on January 13, 1993, following Iraqi threats and refusals to let UN aircraft fly into Iraq, it would be until the December 1998 U.S.-British 70 hour air campaign, that the only “stick” Iraq would feel for deceiving and not cooperating with an actual weapons inspection was a UN letter of condemnation or resolution, of which the effectiveness of the latter has been likened in the Middle East to a parking ticket.

IDENTIFYING POLICY

A critical component in gaining insight from crisis management decisions is to identify the larger policy context within which these decisions were enacted. The

⁹ Scott Ritter, Endgame, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 34.

identification of this policy can then serve as a reference point to better understand actions undertaken during a crisis. Examining this crisis from a U.S. perspective, it is then necessary to determine strategic goals in U.S. policy towards Iraq.

As stated in the Clinton administration's National Security Strategy of May, 1997, U.S. goals were "containing the threat Saddam Hussein poses to Iraq's neighbors, its people, the free flow of Gulf oil and broader U.S. interests in the Middle East." It was "not directed against the people of Iraq but against the aggressive behavior of the government," which must "comply with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions," prior to her "reintegration into the international community." So while this stated strategy did not utilize the term "dual containment" in reference to Iran and Iraq, as was used in the 1996 version, it did annunciate the need to contain Hussein's aggression and focused on reforming his policies, in regards to UN resolutions, not his removal from power.

Although Secretary Albright's first speech on Iraq as Secretary of State, which occurred two months into her tenure, largely reiterated these goals, it also vocalized the administration's belief that such change could not occur with Hussein in power. In her Georgetown address, subtitled "United States Policy Towards Iraq," Albright declared, "we do not agree with the nations who argue that if Iraq complies with its obligations concerning weapons of mass destruction, sanctions should be lifted," but qualified this saying "that by complying with all of the Security Council Resolutions to which it is subject," Iraq could "prove its peaceful intentions," but shifted attention by adding "and the evidence is overwhelming that Saddam Hussein's intentions will never be peaceful," and "a change in Iraq's government could lead to a change in U.S. policy." She stated

the goals of any dialogue with a future, non-Hussein government would be to assure that “the new Iraq would be independent, unified and free from undue external influence... from Iran” and “improvements in behavior” such as “cooperation with UNSCOM... compliance with UN resolutions... respect for human rights, including the rights of minorities... convincing repudiation of terrorism... and military ambitions limited to those of reasonable defense.” Then “Iraq would no longer threaten regional security. Its isolation could end.”¹⁰

Combining these two statements to determine U.S. policy in order to examine the UNSCOM crisis from October 1997 to December 1998, reveals a common focus on the Iraqi government complying with UN resolutions but a significant divergence in whether or not such actions could be implemented by Hussein’s government. Viewing the Iraqi government as a dictatorship, and not one whose policy could change due to an opinion poll or parliamentarian vote of no confidence, this divergence meant the difference between working with a government to induce change or showing the need to support an insurrection.

LEARNING FROM DESERT STRIKE

Another aspect which enables crisis management decisions to be more accurately understood is to view them in the light of pertinent past events and trends. Identifying these reference points helps in understanding a crisis manager’s mindset and the factors

¹⁰ Madeleine K. Albright, “Preserving Principle and Safeguarding Stability.” Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, March 26, 1997. Administration officials later clarified Albright’s statements saying that the U.S. would comply with the law and letter of the UN resolution, and such a statement was authorized by the government to be conveyed to Iraq by Chairman Butler in 1998.

at play in their decision making process. It is not done to portray such decision makers as actors autonomously following a predetermined script. This study will attempt to provide such background information and infuse it in the analysis as such. This will not be a comprehensive depiction, but rather one geared to highlight the significant and seminal events in shaping the outcome of the crisis.

The previously identified ambiguity in the Clinton Administration's policy towards Iraq added a further element of incoherency by its response to the Iraqi Republican Guard military offensive against Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) on August 31, 1996. By only using ground forces to militarily reassert his authority in Irbil, Hussein demonstrated that he did not want to face the likely possibility of losing his aircraft by operating them in the northern US-UK no fly zone, which had been established in 1991 as part of President Bush's Operation PROVIDE COMFORT to protect the Kurds who opposed Hussein.¹¹ The Republican Guard quickly withdrew, only to be replaced by PUK's Kurdish rival, Masoud al-Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). Having recently allied himself with Hussein, Barzani's forces exploited the shock and advantage gained by the Republican Guards and successfully pushed their fellow Kurds back to the mountainous area around Sulaymaniyah.¹²

This offensive forced the U.S. Army to evacuate its Provide Comfort Military Coordination Center in the Iraqi Kurdistan village of Zakhu, and numerous publications have stated that it also terminated a CIA outpost to aid the PUK in destabilizing, and perhaps overthrowing, Hussein's regime. In his immediate reaction to these events,

¹¹ Cockburn, 244.

¹² Amatzia Baram, Building Towards Crisis: Saddam Husayn's Strategy for Survival. Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998, 54.

Clinton stated from his re-election campaign bus tour in Tennessee that it "causes me great concern."¹³ In response, Clinton four days later ordered Operation DESERT STRIKE, a cruise missile strike against anti-aircraft missile sites 400 miles away from Irbil in the southern no-fly zone. While such action decreased a portion of Iraqi's military capability, it did not touch the Iraqi forces which had overrun Irbil, aid the Kurds or bring about any sought after change in Iraqi policy; however, it did demonstrate the waning ability of the U.S. to take military action without the support of crucial states in the region.

It seems likely, and perhaps the eventual declassification of documents will prove, that the U.S. wanted to use its aircraft enforcing the northern no-fly zone, operating out of Incirlik, Turkey, to interdict the Republican Guard armored columns, or at least take retaliatory action directly against those who carried out the attack. But, the future ability of the U.S. to continually operate out of Turkey in support of its Iraqi policy was then largely in question due to the recent emergence of Turkey's Prime Minister, Necmettin Erbakan and his Islamist *Refah* (Welfare) party. Erbakan, in contrast to the Turkish military's strong tradition of U.S. support, questioned the American military presence in Turkey vis-à-vis Iraq. Turkish interests lay in its economic desire to be compensated for, or ending, its boycott of Iraq, to prevent the establishment of an independent Kurdistan which could threaten Turkish control over the southeastern part of its own country inhabited by Kurds, and eliminating infiltration from Iraq into Turkey by the Kurdish Workers' Party, or PKK, which it viewed as a terrorist organization.¹⁴ Even though there

¹³ Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1996, Book II, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998, p 1469.

¹⁴ Baram, Building Towards Crisis, 113.

were strong military to military ties between Turkey and the U.S., either the previous concerns prevented the U.S. from overtly asking for permission to use its Incirlik based aircraft for such direct raids or its initial inquiries were rebuffed.

A similar request was turned down by Saudi Arabia. As indicated by his actions, Clinton considered militarily responding to an Iraqi action within its own borders more important than pursuing a policy supported throughout the region. The only country in the region to support DESERT STRIKE was Kuwait and the bulk of delivered U.S. firepower came from U.S. Air Force B-52s operating from Diego Garcia.¹⁵ Clinton's choice of responding with cruise missiles aimed at targets which were not directly related, seemed to call its overall purpose into question, although then-UN Ambassador Albright declared that "we really whacked them."¹⁶ This disjunction aptly demonstrated to Hussein that the U.S. lacked the will and political capability to quickly and decisively punish his actions which would not directly threaten overt U.S. forces.

After four days of discussions, the Security Council failed to adopt a resolution condemning the Iraqi attack on Irbil. While the U.S. backed a British draft which condemned the Iraqi use of force, the Russians pressed for a modification which condemned all force used in Iraq, which was an indirect method of expanding the condemnation to include the recent U.S. retaliatory cruise missile strike. As a foreshadowing of the Clinton administration's belief that unilateral action was preferred over international political support, Albright declared "that sometimes the Council is not

¹⁵ Ibid., 139.

¹⁶ ABC News, September 9, 1996.

the most effective way to deal with this.”¹⁷

THE LEADERSHIP OF SADDAM HUSSEIN

The Republican Guard operation against Irbil was Hussein's first major use of his armed forces since he humiliatingly had to order them to withdraw from the Kuwaiti border after it was countered by a rapid U.S. buildup in 1994. But Iraq had changed significantly in the preceding two years and Hussein obviously felt that the benefits from such an operation outweighed the potential costs. In order to understand these changes, it is first necessary to examine the nature of the Iraqi government; however, this can be difficult when studying a country without “a constitutional democratic experience” and one which is “politically, ideologically, socio-economically, and culturally very different from those of the West.”¹⁸ So, due to a lack of governmental transparency and freedom of an Iraqi press, the most adequate sources for examining Iraq’s government are those which draw conclusions based upon its actions and statements.

While Iraq is officially governed by its Revolutionary Command Council, all of its members throughout 1997-98 belonged to Hussein’s *Ba’th* (Renaissance) Party. With its senior-most members being reluctant to make decisions without consulting “the government”¹⁹ and a plebiscite held on October 15, 1995, in which 99.96% of the 8 million Iraqis who voted agreed “that Saddam Hussein should be president of Iraq,”²⁰ the

¹⁷ http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1996_index.htm, February 18, 2001.

¹⁸ James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., Contending Theories of International Relations, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 600.

¹⁹ Richard Butler, The Greatest Threat (New York: PublicAffairs, 2000), 171.

²⁰ Andrew Cockburn and Patrick Cockburn, Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein (New York: Harper-Collins, 1999), 203.

country is, from all aspects, a dictatorship. Based on viewing the government as a dictatorship, any efforts to induce a change in behavior must focus directly on inducing Hussein.

Hussein himself, among other things, is a man of violence. He takes great pride in and credits much of his early political legitimacy and leadership clout to his participation in the failed assassination attempt against Iraq's first President, Abd al-Karim Qassim, on October 7, 1959.²¹ Hussein documented his belief in the political power of violence at a *Ba'th* party conference he called after assuming the Presidency from his cousin, Ahmed Hassan al Bakr, in June 1979. At the conference he delivered a speech in which he named anti-government conspirators, held a summary trial and then had their present colleagues shoot them.²² He had all of this videotaped and distributed throughout the party. Also, Hussein's government is dominated by minority Sunni Arabs and several of its branches and organizations consist primarily of tribal factions, especially those from his hometown of Tikrit.²³ In order to maintain power, he has used conventional military forces against the majority Shia Arabs in the south and both conventional and chemical warfare against the Kurds in the north. Hussein's past actions illustrate his belief that the use of any level of force and violence is justified in his pursuit of power.

But violence alone has not kept him in power for over twenty years. Hussein has also demonstrated an incredible political adeptness by using a combination of political patronage to individuals and government subsidies to keep chosen elements of society insulated from economic hardship to assist in his efforts to ensure loyalty. In order to

²¹ Amatzia Baram, Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1968-89 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 11.

²² Alan Munro, An Embassy at War, (London: Brassey's, 1996), 5.

²³ Baram, Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 19.

maintain support for his war against Iran, Hussein enabled Baghdad and other key regions to maintain their standards of living through financial support from fellow Arab countries.²⁴ When the war ended, Hussein generated an economic crisis by not demobilizing his armies when its associated foreign assistance stopped. This has been widely cited as the primary reason for his 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

In a similar fashion, Hussein has attempted to limit the impact of UN sanctions by providing his loyal citizens with "fifteen days' worth of dry food for two weeks out of every month, practically free of charge."²⁵ But again, this put an incredible strain on his currency reserves, which now could not be openly replaced by oil sales or foreign aid. Rather than abandon his WMD program, he proceeded to plunge his economy into inflationary spirals through over-monetarization. Realizing that he needed the UN food for oil program that had been offered as early as 1991, Hussein authorized negotiations on the subject in February, 1996, after the Iraqi dinar had plunged to 3,000 to the U.S. dollar.²⁶ While Security Council Resolution 986 was adopted on April 14, 1996, Iraq refused to accept it, claiming that it infringed upon its sovereignty.²⁷ Negotiations at the UN would continue over implementing 986 until November 1996, when Hussein felt "able to cross the psychological hurdle of accepting the humiliating terms of 986 only" after his victory in Irbil had "hammered home his own reputation as ruthless, strong, and in complete control of Iraq."²⁸

²⁴ Rick Francona, Ally to Adversary, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999), 13.

²⁵ Baram, Building Towards Crisis, 67.

²⁶ Ibid., 70.

²⁷ Ibid., 69-70.

²⁸ Ibid., 72.

Although economic sanctions have hurt Iraq in having to forfeit approximately \$110 billion in oil income from 1990-98, it has compelled import substitution.²⁹ This new economic emphasis has greatly increased Iraq's capacity to produce its own food, which, when combined with leaky oil sanctions and the food for oil program, has significantly reduced the sustained impact of the embargo on Iraq.

While Resolution 986 was supported by Turkey and Arab countries for its economic benefits and reduction of the embargo's impact on fellow Arabs, respectively, it opened a new aspect to the post-embargo nature of Iraq. Part of the resolution called for 13% of total Iraqi oil revenues to purchase food and medicine for the Kurds. This effectively brings them a certain amount of autonomy from the Iraqi government. Any ending of the embargo would likely bring an economically revived Hussein to reassert his authority fully throughout the Kurdish regions, a move which has previously not been opposed by Turkey. This aspect introduces another potential for inconsistency in U.S. policy as to whether or not the U.S. is committed to long range support of the Kurds in contrast with established regional governments or solely as a short-term mechanism to weaken Hussein.

In terms of his domestic political situation, the 1995-96 period was also one of significant change. During this timeframe, Hussein faced two distinct challenges to his rule. The first was the defection to Jordan of his son-in-law, Hussein Kamel, on August 7, 1995. This discredited Hussein in three distinct ways. On the domestic front, it provided evidence of a serious rift within Hussein's own family and ruling elite. When Hussein's son, Uday, began openly criticizing senior members of the *Ba'thi* Party in his newspaper, *Bilal*, and shot his step-Uncle Watban in the leg and fatally wounded several

²⁹ Clawson, Iraq Strategy Review, 2.

others, Hussein Kamel no longer felt safe in his trusted position as being in charge of Iraq's WMDs and the UNSCOM liaison/deception effort.³⁰

His departure also reduced Hussein's carefully cultivated image as a family man. Due to the relative ease with which a man can be granted a divorce under Islamic law, or the Iraqi law which retained elements of it, a married Iraqi woman was seen as having closer familial bonds to her father rather than to her husband. When Hussein Kamel fled with his wife Raghad, Hussein's eldest daughter, his children and fifteen family friends, including his brother's wife Rina, another of Hussein's daughters, it was largely viewed in Iraq as an affront to Hussein's self-promoted image as a loving and devoted father.³¹

But probably the greatest potential damage that Hussein faced from this defection was the likely possibility that his son-in-law would reveal to UNSCOM specific details on Iraq's undeclared WMD program and its concealment mechanism. Rather than waiting to have his duplicity revealed by his son-in-law, Hussein seized the initiative by preemptively making unilateral disclosures to UNSCOM. To do this, Hussein's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, stated that Hussein Kamel had unknowingly been acting on his own in deceiving UNSCOM and revealed the existence of numerous documents on fellow defector Special Republican Guard Major Izz al-Din Muhammad Hassan 'Abd al-Majid's chicken farm, which had supposedly been hidden. Such documentation revealed the existence of a previously undisclosed Iraqi effort at the development and weaponization of biological agents, computer disks documenting the Iraqi nuclear

³⁰ Cockburn, 194.

³¹ Baram, Building Towards Crisis, 9.

weapons program, the existence of two undeclared ballistic missile launchers and the presence of molds for ballistic missile manufacturing.³²

Another factor of Hussein Kamel's defection was where he fled to: Jordan. Due to the large presence of Palestinians in Jordan, King Hussein had shrewdly sided with Hussein following his invasion of Kuwait.³³ This largely pleased his Palestinian subjects who held a dim view of Kuwait as a place where Palestinians were largely denied political rights and primarily employed as low paid servants and laborers, and were elated when Hussein linked any Iraqi decision to withdraw troops from Kuwait with the need for Israel to withdraw from Arab lands.³⁴ King Hussein, as leader of a small Arab state without the economic power of large oil reserves, had been distancing himself from Baghdad by signing a bilateral peace treaty with Israel on October 26, 1994, and improving his relations with the Gulf States, which had been damaged by his support of Iraq. His acceptance of Hussein Kamel, combined with his criticizing Iraq in two public statements and the seizure by Jordanian customs officials of Russian made gyroscopes, missile and aircraft parts, and "a few kilograms of extremely dangerous substances," deprived Hussein of his most important, and last, ally in the region.³⁵ This isolation revealed Iraq's need to reintegrate itself into the Arab world in order to be able to effectively use any claim to be furthering the goals of an Arab nation in his efforts to remove sanctions, retain his WMD programs and, most importantly, keep himself in power.

³² Ritter, 49, Butler 123.

³³ Note, his grandfather, King Abdallah had been assassinated by a Palestinian outside of Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque in 1951.

³⁴ "The Gulf Crisis," 8.

³⁵ Baram, Building Towards Crisis, 125.

Two other events provided further evidence of the growing dissatisfaction within Hussein's most trusted elements. On May 17, 1996, in response to the arrest, torturing and execution of the leader of the al-Bu Nimr clan of the Dulaym tribe, Major General Muhammad Mazlum al-Dulaymi, the al-Bu Nimr clan staged violent demonstrations in Ramadi against Hussein.³⁶ The next month, Hussein's son, Qusay, uncovered plans for a July coup by officers of the Special Forces battalion within the Special Republican Guard, which were believed to be backed by the Jordanian based Iraqi National Accord and the CIA.³⁷ After purging their disloyal elements, the need to reaffirm trust in both groups and restore pride in one of his most trusted and capable military units must have been viewed as a pressing need.

Hussein's answer for solving his economic problems and political loyalty dilemmas was in his attack on Irbil. In one fell swoop, Hussein was able to measure the extent of international political unity against him, test the U.S. ability to react, demonstrate a strength which would allow him to accept a needed but long decried food-for-oil program, reduce his Kurdish opposition, eliminate a rumored CIA presence on Iraqi soil and restore pride in his military, which had been reduced through Hussein's coup rumor inspired purges and a humiliating defeat by the Kurds in 1995. This combined effect greatly strengthened Hussein domestically and gave him a significant understanding of weaknesses in the international coalition which had previously seemed unified against him.

Hussein's acceptance of Resolution 986 and the elaborate effort he revealed after his

³⁶ Ritter, 115.

³⁷ Baram, Building Towards Crisis, 50.

son-in-law's defection to retain a WMD capability in spite of his contrary promises, indicate that all along he viewed the removal of sanctions and maintaining non-conventional weapons and ballistic missiles as being critical to his remaining in power. As the crises of 1997-98 would reveal, the previously mentioned changes which occurred in 1995-96 brought about a significant change in Hussein's strategy to pursue his goals.

Although Hussein's previous efforts kept him in power and with retained remnants of a WMD and ballistic missile capability, he still had to contend with an embargo which denied him hard currency and conduct a continuous WMD 'shell game' to prevent UNSCOM from further discrediting him and limiting his capabilities. His previous attempts at using force to impose his will internationally had ended with a punishing defeat by the coalition forces and his recalling of troops from the Kuwaiti border in 1994. Nor did his forced effort at civil disobedience work in the summer of 1992, when crowds near his Ministry of Agriculture surrounded an UNSCOM inspection team and pelted them with tomatoes, which, along with past Iraqi WMD disclosure omissions, resulted in Security Council Resolution 707, which strongly condemned his actions and left open the option of military strikes by member nations. He then switched to denying the UNSCOM L-100 transport aircraft permission to enter Iraqi airspace during December 1992, which stranded UN personnel in Baghdad.³⁸ This produced a Security Council condemnation which included the synonymous phrase for military action of finding Iraq in "material breech" of their obligations under Resolution 687. This UN authorization, coupled with the repeated Iraqi targeting of U.S. aircraft in the no-fly zones, prompted

³⁸ http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/e...the_brink.htm, February 28, 2001.

President Bush during his last week in office to launch an air strike against Iraqi anti-aircraft missile sites in the southern no-fly zone.³⁹

The previously mentioned need to rely on studies of Iraq due to the lack of reliable primary sources means that determining the reasons why Hussein changed his strategy on countering UNSCOM and sanctions during 1997-98 needs to be based on assumptions drawn from actions. But rather than portraying these changes as being merely circumstantial, the large extent of success which was achieved, combined with previous statements, reveal a government which had studied its chief opponent and was able to determine potential for, create, and then exploit, weakness. I believe that this position is validated in Ofra Bengio's analysis of *Ba 'thi* political discourse from its party documents, pamphlets, newspapers and books, where she states that for Hussein "reading history is not entertainment, a waste of time, or even just an expansion of knowledge, but rather a matter of drawing lessons and forming a worldview."⁴⁰ She uses several sources, including a 1978 speech by Hussein on "Rewriting History," to show his use of history for self-serving political aims when he stated that "we do not seek to return to history, but rather to move history toward us."⁴¹ Numerous examples of linking the past to his political goals are illustrated in comparing the Iran-Iraq War to the 637 victory of the newly Islamized Arabs over the Sasanian Persians at al-Qadissiyah, himself as a modern day Nebuchadnezzar and legitimizing his leadership by claiming to be a descendant of the Prophet Muhammed.⁴²

³⁹ www.history.navy.mil, February 28, 2001.

⁴⁰ Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 166.

⁴¹ Ibid., 164.

⁴² Ibid., 64, 79-80, 83.

In a heated exchange with UNSCOM Inspector Scott Ritter, Major General Amer Rashid, the *Ba ’thi* Oil Minister and Hussein Kamal’s replacement in the UNSCOM deception effort, gave evidence of his astute understanding of American history. When he confronted Ritter over UNSCOM’s political objectives in exposing Iraqi security agencies, Ritter responded by holding a folder up in the air entitled “The Iraqi Concealment Mechanism” which he said contained evidence of Iraqi duplicity based on Hussein Kamel’s defection. Rashid interrupted, stating:

“Please don’t use the McCarthy approach of the 1950s. Tell me you have this information or not. I could say I have two or more documents also... I know your links to intelligence and I could go through them, say I have a document that proves this, that you are an American spy. Either you have information, or you do not. Which is it?”⁴³

This accurate and impromptu recognition of Ritter’s tactic as being similar to an event in U.S. history, reveals that those in power in Iraq have extensively studied their opponent and, more importantly, are capable of effectively utilizing such knowledge. Tariq Aziz also showed a familiarity with U.S. history during a long diatribe against UNSCOM which occurred in a December 14, 1997 meeting with Butler when he stated, “Iraq is not a defeated country, UNSCOM is not an army of occupation, and you are not General MacArthur!”⁴⁴ Certainly this knowledge helped the *Ba ’thi* government “to form a judgment as to how the adversary view[ed] the crisis situation and how he can be influenced.”⁴⁵ This undoubtedly would greatly assist Iraqi crisis managers in being able

⁴³ Ritter, 152.

⁴⁴ Butler, 114.

⁴⁵ Alexander George, Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 558.

to “see the situation through the eyes of the adversary,” so that they were better able “to judge the effects of their own actions.”⁴⁶

Recognizing that Iraq has studied the U.S. to the extent that a senior party member was able to unexpectedly link the gesture of holding an undisclosed document in the air as proof of a claim from a UNSCOM weapons inspector in Iraq to a U.S. Senator over forty years ago, it is quite reasonable to believe that Iraqi officials were familiar with the successful North Vietnamese strategy of wearing down domestic support for U.S. military action by waging a protracted war, the limits of the President as Commander in Chief under the War Powers Act of 1973, and the U.S. desire to use military force in the Gulf region with local support and UN authorization. Whereas Iraq, and previously, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, were unable to defeat U.S. military forces in battle, the 1997-98 crises reveal an Iraqi strategy readjustment to now focus on undermining the ability of the U.S. to effectively bring its forces to bear through the waging of a media and diplomatic assault on its weakest aspects, that of domestic cohesion and international support. Having failed to defeat the U.S. with force, Iraq would now ingeniously invert its policy by embracing its own weaknesses as its greatest strength and turn the U.S.’s military strength into a liability. In a similar manner, Iraq would try to alleviate the weakness caused by its regional and worldwide isolation, by using U.S. military strength and actions to force itself to be isolated.

An important aspect of this strategy would be to end continued Iraqi isolation within the Arab world. Whereas Iraq’s own actions against fellow Arabs belittled their calls for Arab unity via other rulers, they would soon use the Arab and international media to

⁴⁶ Alexander L. George, Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management (Boulder: Westview, 1991), 18.

carry their message directly to the “Arab Street.” Iraq also found unlikely allies in three of the crucial Permanent Five (P-5) nations of the UN Security Council, namely France, Russia and China. Interested in purchasing oil, selling weapons and recouping past-due weapons loans, these nations would see an increasing opportunity in Iraq to further their self-interests and gain leverage against a U.S. which they increasingly began to see during the latter half of the 1990’s as being the only superpower, but yet one hypersensitive on any issue which it perceived to be against its own national interests.

Not only did Hussein Kamel’s defection have consequences within Iraq, it significantly changed the nature of UNSCOM. While UNSCOM’s first chairman, Rolf Ekeus, was pleased with the large quantity of weapons, agents and documentation uncovered, Aziz’s preemptive disclosures revealed that Iraq had successfully misled UNSCOM through a concentrated effort. This caused Ekeus to establish an inspection team which would specifically target the Iraqi concealment effort.⁴⁷ This effort would bring UNSCOM into direct confrontation with the very heart of the organization which kept Hussein in power; his security and intelligence units.

To understand the ramifications of this policy and how determined Hussein’s government would be to resist and eventually terminate it, the previous description of that government as a dictatorship needs to be combined with that which it values. As a dictatorship, the government’s center of gravity is by definition the dictator. All efforts of the government focus on protecting the dictator, his ability to rule and carrying out his wishes; this results in personal loyalty to the dictator being viewed as the most sought after trait in government officials. The assets which a dictator values most are those

⁴⁷ Butler, 123.

which enable him to maintain power, namely his army and his intelligence sources which can alert him to any potential threats to his reign.

Having previously used chemical weapons to further his powerful ambitions, and possibly believing that nuclear weapons could have prevented or altered the outcome of the war to remove his forces from Kuwait, Hussein also placed a high value on his weapons of mass destruction program, as indicated by the great length in which he went to conceal them. Not only could they be used to possibly deter military action by the West, but through his WMD program Hussein could claim to be the first Arab leader to achieve parity with Israel. Scarred by lopsided Israeli victories in 1948, 1956, and 1967, and their tenacious comeback in 1973, the Arab psyche would naturally be receptive to being able to ‘level the playing field’ with Israel, especially with the nearby presence of an unconfirmed, but largely, assumed Israeli nuclear arsenal. This desire to be able to strike Israel was only exacerbated in Iraq following the 1981 Israeli air raid on the Iraqi nuclear compound at Osirik on the outskirts of Baghdad.⁴⁸

This pride in countering Israel is also present in the Iraqi ballistic missile force. While Iraq received conventional, short-range SCUD missiles as part of its 1972 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union, they modified them to become the 400 mile range eponymous Al-Hussein, or its variant, the Al-Hijara, and developed indigenous production of the former.⁴⁹ To Iraqis, these missiles are viewed as having been crucial to the 1988 Second War of the Cities during the Iran-Iraq War in bringing about an Iranian acceptance of the UN ceasefire. These missiles and Unit 224, which maintained and fired them, would again be seen as heroes and saviors during the Gulf

⁴⁸ “News Summary,” New York Times, June 9, 1981.

⁴⁹ Anthony Cordesman and Ahmed Hashim, Iraq: Sanctions and Beyond (Boulder: Westview, 1997), 307.

War. Although the Coalition forces devoted a significant portion of their assets to locate and destroy these launchers and missiles, not a single one was lost. When Ritter was inspecting the unit's bombed out Taji barracks in 1992, he:

“noticed that the roads had been lined with freshly painted white rocks, and that there was a smartly attired honor guard posted at the entrance. When I drove through, the honor guard snapped to attention. I was somewhat confused about this activity, until I noticed the signs posted alongside the road, which was boarded on both sides by bombed-out buildings. In neat Arabic script, the signs read: ‘It was enough that we made Israel cry.’”⁵⁰

As powerful and proven weapons, they could only be entrusted to those in whom Hussein believed were most loyal; therefore, any intelligence efforts to determine the location and extent of his weapons of mass destruction program would first have to penetrate the innermost core of his regime. Naturally, this effort would be fiercely resisted in a dictatorship. In an apparent effort to deny anyone but himself the ability to accumulate power and probably to prevent a significant loss should one organization be compromised, Hussein relies on several organizations for intelligence, his personnel security and protecting his ballistic missiles and WMD, namely, the Directorate for General Security (*Amn al-Amm*), Special Security Organization (*Amn al-Khass*), Directorate of General Intelligence (*Mukhabarat*) and the Directorate of Military Intelligence (*Istachbarat*).⁵¹

In order to verify Iraq disclosures about their WMD program, UNSCOM needed intelligence, chiefly in the form of aerial and satellite imagery of declared and suspected

⁵⁰ Ritter, 75.

⁵¹ Cordesman Hashim, 44-49.

weapons sites throughout Iraq. With the creation of UNSCOM's concealment unit, the need for intelligence expanded to include not only where, but how, Iraq was concealing weapons, manufacturing equipment and design information.⁵² This information could only be acquired through human intelligence or the interception of phone and radio conversations, which is a complex and technologically involved process known as signals intelligence. As the UN does not have a military branch, weapons inspectors or an intelligence unit, it must rely solely upon its member nations to carry out its resolution, or, as was the case with UNSCOM, contribute personnel, equipment and information to function under UN auspices. This reliance on receiving support from member nations, which in principle should have been one of UNSCOM's greatest strengths in generating international support for its activities, would reveal itself during the crises to be at the heart of its demise.

A potential opportunity to readjust U.S. policy in light of the numerous changes in Iraq, Southwest Asia, Europe and the UN, presented itself when Madeleine Albright took over as the U.S. Secretary of State in January 1997, after Warren Christopher stepped down. But, when she committed herself to maintaining a policy of broad containment in hope that Hussein would be toppled internally, she removed from herself the burden of having to implement any new strategy and was able to wait until actions forced her to react.

On September 29, 1997, such an event occurred. In response to raids carried out in Iran by Iraqi supported and based Iranian Mujahidin e-Khalq (MEK) resistance fighters, four Iranian F-4 Phantom II aircraft bombed their camps in eastern Iraq. When Iraqi MIG 21 and 23 aircraft were scrambled to repel the threat, they violated the recently

⁵² butler, 181.

expanded U.S./U.K. enforced southern no-fly zone.⁵³ In response to Iranian aggression and the Iraqi no-fly zone violation, the Pentagon announced that the aircraft carrier, USS NIMITZ (CVN 68) and its battlegroup would bypass a planned port call to Singapore and instead proceed directly to the Arabian Gulf.⁵⁴ It would be in this increasingly intense environment that Saddam Hussein would invoke his first public challenge to UNSCOM since 1995.

THE CRISES

The UNSCOM crisis of 1997-98 is really a series of five individual crises which end up reoccurring due to the lack of a circumventing move or resolution of the conflict's underlying causes. They all have a similar framework of: 1) Iraq initiating the crisis with a tactical surprise via non-compliance with UNSCOM, 2) a U.S. reactive escalation consisting of a buildup of military forces in the Arabian Gulf, coalition attempts and a committal move in the form of a statement to take action at a time and place of its choosing as a result of Iraqi non-compliance, 3) the UN eventually generating a resolution supportive of UNSCOM but always short of directly authorizing force, 4) the Gulf Cooperation Council⁵⁵ issuing a joint statement urging Iraq to cooperate, 5) international diplomatic moves largely on behalf of Russia or France in an attempt to de-escalate, and lastly, 6) a de-escalation of the crisis at hand without resolving the

⁵³ Baram, Building Towards Crisis, 99.

⁵⁴ Philip Shenon, "Ship Moves to Persian Gulf Over Iran-Iraq Clash," New York Times, October 4, 1997, A1.

⁵⁵ The GCC states are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

underlying issues. Therefore, rather than repetitively listing the specific events of each crisis according to a standard crisis outline, the focus will primarily be upon events which indicated or led to significant changes in how the crisis was managed.

THREATS AND RUSSIANS

Iraq ended the new UNSCOM Chairman's, Richard Butler, honeymoon three months into his tenure, when Tariq Aziz expanded the definition of sensitive, or presidential, sites which had been reached secretly between himself and Ekeus, in an Agreement for the Modalities of Sensitive Site Inspections⁵⁶ and interfered with UNSCOM access to inspection sites, including an attempt by an Iraqi monitor to seize the controls of a UN helicopter during an approach to an inspection site. Butler documented these episodes in his October report to the Security Council, which resulted in Resolution 1134 of October 23, 1997.⁵⁷ Rather than forcing Iraq to comply, this resolution set the precedent of being the first Security Council Resolution regarding UNSCOM which was not unanimously passed. Although it was not voted against, Kenya, Egypt and the P-5 members Russia, France and China, abstained. Sensing a weakening of the previous international consensus against it, Iraq responded six days later. In a letter to the President of the Security Council, Aziz stated that Iraq refused to work with any American UNSCOM members and demanded that they leave Iraq within seven days because UNSCOM had become "an institution influenced to a large extent by America's hostile policy aimed at

⁵⁶ Ritter, 140.

⁵⁷ Butler, 90.

fulfilling its illegal and illegitimate objectives.”⁵⁸ On November 2 and 3, Iraq carried out its threat and refused to work with American inspectors or let any Americans off a UN flight which had arrived from Bahrain. The Iraqi Ambassador to the UN, Nizan Hamdoon, escalated the situation on the second by stating that Iraq would shoot down the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft operated out of Saudi Arabia by the U.S. on behalf of the UN.⁵⁹

This Iraqi escalation resulted in a return to unanimity on the Security Council, as Resolution 1137 was adopted on November 12, which condemned Iraq for its actions and implemented an international travel ban on Iraqi officials, which would be removed once the UNSCOM Chairman reported that Iraq was complying with inspections. Iraq again then escalated the situation by demanding that all Americans leave the country, with which Butler eventually complied by removing all UNSCOM personnel, citing the safety of the personnel entrusted to him. This crisis was resolved on November 20, after a two day meeting in Moscow between Tariq Aziz and Russian Foreign Minister Primakov which produced a joint Russian-Iraqi statement claiming that Iraq would cooperate with UNSCOM in return for a reexamination of sanctions.

This episode marked Russia’s most overt and direct involvement in an UNSCOM crisis. Butler later referred to the Russian interest in this matter as being primarily financial, as Primakov had told him that Russia wanted to recoup \$8 billion in weapons payments from Iraq.⁶⁰ However, based on Iraq’s past unwillingness to pay off its debts following the Iran-Iraq War, the net effect of removing sanctions would likely harm the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 92.

⁵⁹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/e...the_brink.htm, February 28, 2001.

⁶⁰ Butler, 106.

Russian economy, as any potential Iraqi payment on past due weapons loans would probably be offset through a decrease in income due to an anticipated drop in world oil prices brought about by increased Iraqi production. Ruling out an economic explanation, it seems as if the traditional Russian policy of desiring to weaken other powers' capability to act in the Gulf was taking hold. Butler also questioned Primakov's motives, due to his reputation as a former Soviet hard-line Arabist, which was based on his personal relationship with Hussein which started after their first meeting in 1969 and his service as former Soviet leader Gorbachev's special envoy to Hussein prior to the Gulf War.⁶¹ In his book, The Greatest Threat, Butler writes that numerous sources which he considered to be reliable had informed him that Primakov was receiving personal payments from Iraq. Rolf Ekeus also noted that proposals made by Aziz often matched Primakov's proposals word for word.⁶²

From a crisis management perspective, the three most unique aspects of this first episode are Iraq choosing the UN as the venue from which to issue its threats, the first concrete signs of waning international consensus on assuring that Iraq fully complies with Resolution 687 and discussion on how any portion of such compliance should be ensured. By relying on directly expressed threats of force issued in an international body, Iraq lost the ambiguity and dissention it desired on the UN Security Council when its provocative statements resulted in a return of unanimity to the Council. While no doubt viewing a consensus on Resolution 1137 as a victory, the difficulty which the U.S. had in attracting support to its position on Iraq during Operation DESERT STRIKE and in voting on Resolution 1134, should have served as a wake up call for the Clinton

⁶¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/e...diplomacy/newsid_237000/237913.stm, February 18, 2001.

⁶² Ibid.

administration; continuing a status quo policy against Iraq without any realistic end in sight was bound to elicit confrontation. Getting and maintaining support for U.S. policy in the Gulf Region would require more than just breaking out former Secretary of State James Baker's rolodex once a crisis developed. Also, on November 12, Clinton stated that even though Resolution 1137 did not contain the "material breach" clause which came to be regarded as an authorization for UN member nations to use force based on its precedence in the January 1993 air strike, that it had the right to respond militarily under Resolution 678, with authorized the forcible expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait and Resolution 687.⁶³

While this position would seem to reinforce the U.S. capability to successfully apply coercive diplomacy, in reality it furthered its erosion. By justifying the use of force without the strong international consensus which had characterized the Gulf War, Clinton started on a course of insisting that a member of the UN had the right to militarily enforce a UN resolution without receiving UN support. This policy would leave the Clinton administration vulnerable to charges of selectively enforcing UN resolutions to meet stated U.S. strategic goals. This position differed significantly from previous Bush administration suggestions of not needing a UN resolution to liberate Kuwait, as it could act under Article 51 of the UN Charter concept of coming to the aid of a nation in self-defense.⁶⁴ It also called into question why military action without international political support was chosen to augment an overall policy on Iraq which critically relied upon international political support to maintain the embargo and continue UNSCOM's efforts. This paradox greatly inhibited any probability of U.S. policy achieving its stated aims.

⁶³ Papers of the Presidents, Clinton, 1997, Book II, 1519-20.

⁶⁴ "The Gulf War," 16.

But the international glow of having averted a military confrontation in Iraq which, Primakov was basking in, was short lived. Less than forty-eight hours after his crisis averting announcement, Iraq began qualifying its commitment on the inspection of presidential and national security sites.⁶⁵ While the confrontation kept simmering for the next month over UN access to different airfields besides Habbaniyah, UNSCOM's review of the Special Modalities for Special Site Inspections, and the formation of Technical Evaluation Meetings to transparently discuss Iraqi progress on specific issues based on documents provided by Iraq, it would again be brought to the forefront through an Iraqi escalation.⁶⁶

ANNON VISITS HUSSEIN

The most interesting aspects of the December 1997 – February 1998 crisis are the evolving Iraqi positions on the use of force and the role of the media, and the inability of the U.S. to establish an international or domestic consensus for using force to implement a UN resolution. Instead of discouraging international support for its position by issuing threats at the UN, Iraq now shifted focus. On January 5, 1998, a rocket-propelled grenade was fired against the Canal Hotel, which housed UNSCOM personnel and served as its Baghdad Monitoring and Verification Center. Iraq denied knowledge of the attack, but it served as a poignant reminder for all UNSCOM personnel during periods of heightened tension.

⁶⁵ Butler, 112.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 116-119.

Ambassador Hamdoon, as part of a coordinated effort to justify blocking Scott Ritter's UNSCOM 227 inspection team from inspecting Baghdad's Abu Ghraib Prison in order to find documentation on the alleged testing of biological agents on prisoners in 1994, stated that teams "made up of Americans and British... [who] are giving currency to false allegations... to mislead the Security Council and world public opinion... [so that] the embargo will remain in place and will continue to murder Iraqis in the service of the declared United States policy against Iraq."⁶⁷ This was followed up on January 17, when Hussein called for a million new army volunteers and stated that Iraq was "determined irrevocably to wage the greater jihad for the lifting of the [UN] blockade."⁶⁸ This effort was a combination of discrediting UNSCOM and generating domestic support for Hussein's policies by belittling UNSCOM as a U.S. and British tool focused on continuing the oppression of the Iraqi people through sanctions. By insisting on this position, Iraq was attempting to shift the WMD burden of proof from itself to a beleaguered UNSCOM which would then have to devote a continually increasing percentage of its time and resources to explain and defend its actions and less towards accomplishing its mandate.

Iraq also began to focus on the use of information, which it did effectively through the use of foreign media. In December 1997, Iraq changed its traditional policy of limiting the amount of foreign reporters and journalists it admitted and opened the door to over 800 of them by February 1998.⁶⁹ This enabled Iraq to help change its world image from that of a closed, military dominated society to one which was unfairly being targeted by a

⁶⁷ United Nations, S/1998/28, January 13, 1998.

⁶⁸ Baram, Building Towards Crisis, 1, 162.

⁶⁹ Cockburn, 275.

U.S. conceived UN policy aimed at the genocidal destruction of its people. Foreign film crews showed starving, dying and dead children, which Iraq directly attributed to UN sanctions, although this image conflicted with Iraq's own claims to have sustained its highest ever level of population growth of two million from the Gulf War to 1998.⁷⁰

Now, not only would Kings and Emirs who were intent on keeping Saddam Hussein from invading their countries or using weapons of mass destruction, have to justify the use of western force against Iraq, they also needed to justify a policy which resulted in killing fellow Arab children. This would be compounded throughout the Arab world by the advent of satellite dishes and the internet, which eroded the previous capability of authoritarian governments to limit the knowledge of their populace through state-controlled media.⁷¹

This effort has been incredibly effective in preventing stronger Arab, and specifically Gulf Cooperation Council, support for U.S. policy and also in discouraging traditional European allies. This Iraqi policy even got a boost during the early 1998 crisis in the unlikely form of Pope John Paul II when he described UN sanctions as “biological warfare against a civilian population” and decried the policy of having targeted Iraqi infrastructure in past air strikes.⁷²

Faced with two U.S. carrier battlegroups in the Gulf, an increased Air Force presence, additional U.S. Army Patriot Missile batteries and a history of past U.S. military action against Iraq, Hussein certainly was aware that the U.S. had the means to act. But what was acutely lacking was the will to use force in the form of an international consensus.

⁷⁰ Baram, Building Towards Crisis, 72.

⁷¹ Cockburn, 276.

⁷² Ibid., 275.

Generally, for the threat of force to have a diplomatic effect for deterrence or compellence, it must be demonstrated as being able to be used credibly and conveyed to those whom you want to influence. As “the perceived solidarity of [an] alliance affects the amount of coercive or deterrent power that can be generated vis-à-vis the adversary,”⁷³ the former of this was undermined by the inability of the U.S. to receive international support for its policy of threatening military force to ensure Iraqi compliance with UNSCOM.

The western media also played another interesting role in this crisis. While Hussein was able to effectively use the media to further his agenda of disrupting any consensus against him, President Clinton was not able to do so. In order to generate support for his tough stance against Iraq, the Clinton administration resorted to the newly instituted venue of a televised town hall meeting. Unlike on the campaign trail, this worked decisively against him when Secretaries Albright, Cohen and National Security Advisor Berger were heckled and their voices nearly drowned out by an unruly, mob-like audience at Bowling Green State University in Ohio on February 18, 1998. Even with Clinton attempting to salvage the event, by describing it as “a good old-fashioned American style debate,”⁷⁴ it was repeatedly shown on Iraqi state television and the Qatar based network *al-Jazeera* and was a clear signal to Baghdad that there was domestic opposition to Clinton’s policy, which, as evidenced by the North Vietnamese thirty years earlier, through time and obstinacy could effectively be used to overcome U.S. policy.

Facing both a Republican House and Senate since 1994, President Clinton had faced numerous political fights over budgetary and ethical scandals, including filegate,

⁷³ Jonathon M. Roberts, Decision Making During International Crises (New York: St. Martin’s Press), 28.

⁷⁴ Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Clinton, Book I, 1998, 130.

travelgate and an enduring White Water investigation over land deals in Arkansas.

During the 1997-98 timeframe, his affair with a White House intern also became public knowledge and was intermeshed in Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's White Water investigation. The political pressure which this put on the President cannot be calculated but must have been inescapable from his mind when he was formulating crisis decisions aimed directly at limiting his effectiveness as a leader and perhaps removing him from office. In a similar fashion to Hussein's views on UNSCOM, Clinton viewed these scandals as direct attacks upon himself and his power. Through an Iraqi tactical surprise, the UNSCOM crises could be initiated at Hussein's will to effect Clinton at the times when he would be least able to singularly concentrate and focus his efforts and resources upon such a crisis.

President Clinton further lost political support following UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's shuttle diplomacy mission to Baghdad in February 1998, when Annan secured a promise from Saddam Hussein to restart his cooperation with UNSCOM and allow the inspectors access to the presidential sites which he had declared off limits, in exchange for a UN review of its economic sanctions policy and the addition of senior diplomats as a separate group to accompany UNSCOM inspectors during their presidential site inspections. With Hussein's history of aggression, deceit and use of chemical weapons, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott took the opportunity to denounce Annan's actions as "appeasement" in light of his statement that Hussein, "is a man I can work with," and the Clinton administration's policy for its lack of resolve.⁷⁵ This marked the first time since the congressional debate over authorizing the use of force in liberating Kuwait during January 1991, that U.S. policy on Iraq became a partisan issue.

This lack of bipartisan congressional support for Clinton's Iraqi policy could weaken the President in two ways. First, under the War Powers Act of 1973, the President as the Commander in Chief can commit U.S. armed forces for at most a 60-90 day window without specific congressional authorization. Also, congress could use its "power of the purse" to deny the President the funding he would need to position military forces overseas or rearm and resupply them after an engagement. As the Department of Defense is prohibited from budgeting for contingency operations, the U.S. \$1.36 billion that it cost to move to an increased military presence in the Gulf region, not to mention the opportunity costs of that force not being somewhere else conducting training, operating with allies or showing the flag, would have to come from somewhere.⁷⁶ Secondly, a scandal-ridden President approaching lame-duck status who would want to avoid being blamed for any potential Democratic party failures in the upcoming midterm elections, would have to use up precious political capital and lose leverage on other issues in order to quiet Republican opposition on his foreign policy. The psychological effects and political constraints which such public predicaments brought about on the President, could easily be capitalized upon by Hussein.

The most significant change of this first crisis of 1998 was Iraq's ability to use its cohorts on the Security Council and the office of the UN Secretary General to shift the onus of responsibility from Iraq to UNSCOM which was done by politicizing several aspects of UNSCOM rather than maintaining it as a technical body focused on verifying disarmament status and then reporting such directly to the Security Council. The first hard evidence of this shift came in Secretary General Annan's supplementary report of

⁷⁵ John M. Goshko, "Lott Criticizes Iraq Deal as 'Appeasement,'" Washington Post, Feb 26, 1998, A22.

⁷⁶ Clawson, 112.

February 1, 1998, to the Security Council regarding the implementation of the UN humanitarian program for Iraq, when he stated that he opposed any linkage between that program's efforts and Iraqi violations of Security Council resolutions, which conflicted with the spirit and letter of Resolution 687.⁷⁷

An interesting divergence within the UN itself was exhibited when Annan accepted Tariq Aziz's recommendation to provide a UN cartographic team independent of UNSCOM to assist Iraq in establishing and mapping Iraqi Presidential Sites. The team was wined and dined by its Iraqi hosts, allowed to land at Baghdad's Saddam Hussein airport while UNSCOM was relegated to the Habaniyyah Air Base which was over a one hour drive from its Baghdad facilities, and shown large demonstrations of Iraqi citizens forming human chains in front of several Iraqi Presidential Palaces in order to protect them from potential U.S./U.K. air strikes. When the team leader, Staffan de Mistura, presented his report to the Security Council, he defended Iraq's right to maintain over 1,000 buildings and 35 square kilometers of land which would be off limits to UNSCOM inspections so as not to offend "cultural values."⁷⁸ The photographs, maps and documents produced by this team were maintained exclusively by the UN Secretariat and, although they were provided to Iraq, there was only a brief period when they could be viewed by Security Council members.⁷⁹

The largest concession to Iraq in limiting the ability of UNSCOM to carry out its mandate in the name of Iraqi sovereign dignity, was the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) reached between Annan and Aziz on February 22, 1998, in Baghdad. Without

⁷⁷ Butler, 127.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 134.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 132.

explicit Security Council approval, or the presence of any disarmament experts in his entourage, Annan signed an agreement which abrogated UNSCOM's Resolution 687 right to "immediate and unrestricted access to any site, document or person in Iraq," and the Executive Chairman's responsibility to "determine where, when, and for how long such access should be sought,... overall conduct of UNSCOM's business in all aspects," which would include personnel composition of teams,... [and] report on all aspects of... work directly to the Security Council."⁸⁰ When the Security Council adopted the MOU in Resolution 1154 on March 2, Iraqi Presidential Sites could now only be inspected by a "Special Group" consisting of UNSCOM/IAEA members and senior diplomats appointed by the Secretary-General, the Special Modalities would continue to apply to any site so deemed by Iraq, and UNSCOM was directed to "intensify efforts in order to complete its mandate... [as] the lifting of sanctions is obviously of paramount importance... [which] the Secretary-General [would] bring... to the full attention of the members of the Security Council."⁸¹ But as Annan was being hailed as the man of the hour during a spontaneous welcoming reception arranged via e-mail by his office, Iraq was already indicating its desire not to comply with the latest compromise in the form of a letter from Aziz to Annan on February 23, when he proposed giving Iraq additional control over the "Special Groups," which he identified as having been agreed to by Annan during the February 22 meeting. While Annan strongly denounced any additional understandings and denied any undisclosed side bar discussions, UN investigators did conduct an investigation on how Aziz's letter was 'leaked' to U.K. Ambassador, Sir John Weston.⁸²

⁸⁰ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1154 of March 2, 1998.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Butler, 145.

The very existence of Annan's mission to Baghdad and its subsequent dilution of UNSCOM's capability to verify Iraq disarmament claims, exposed the further evaporation of international political support for UNSCOM, which seriously eroded chances for U.S. policy on Iraq to succeed. As Secretary-General, Annan occupied a unique diplomatic role in that he had unparalleled international moral stature, but no means of power to implement policy except to rely upon a consensus in the Security Council and then upon its member states to enact and enforce adopted resolutions. In this manner, it was not until French President Jacques Chirac publicly endorsed Annan's desire to travel to Baghdad, although he had considered going as early as the beginning of February, that Annan was able to do so. This French position also "boxed-in" the U.S., as voicing any opposition to Annan's mission would seem to indicate that the U.S. favored air strikes over diplomacy and would further undermine the U.S. desire to pursue its goal of disabling the Iraqi WMD capability via a UN organization.

By not violating the MOU to the extent that it would upset the UN Secretary-General during the next five months and in Hussein making his first large-scale public appearances since 1991, Iraq clearly viewed Resolution 1154 and its termination of the current crisis as a victory.⁸³ UNSCOM had been hindered, the U.S. was unable to establish satisfactory preconditions for bringing its overwhelming force to bear, and a divide was created within the UN organization itself. Although the U.S. and U.K. would maintain an increased naval presence in the region until May 1998, UNSCOM would largely remain out of the headlines until questions about the undisclosed weaponization of advanced nerve agents forced the simmering undercurrents from unresolved issues to

⁸³ Cockburn, 277.

again precipitate a crisis against a background of rumored UNSCOM espionage, a publicly announced doubling of U.S. cruise missiles in the region, a sitting U.S. President being summoned by a Grand Jury to testify as a defendant and one of the hottest summers on record in the Arabian Gulf.

VX, SPIES AND NON-COOPERATION

The persistent nerve agent, VX, had been a source of confrontation ever since Hussein Kamel's defection proved that Iraq had lied about never having developed the agent. At the time Iraq switched its tune and stated that although it had been developed, it had never been weaponized. This lie was exposed on June 23, 1998, when UNSCOM disclosed that it had recovered remnants of artillery projectiles with degraded traces of VX and its associated stabilizing agent.⁸⁴ This, coupled with outstanding issues on the Iraqi capability to domestically produce ballistic missiles, rocket propellant and biological agents, and the Iraqi refusal to let UNSCOM inspectors copy a document they found which listed special weapons (the Iraqi term for chemical and biological weapons) expended by the Iraqi Air Force during the Iran-Iraq war (of which the 100,000 purportedly used items remained unaccounted for), prompted Iraq to declare on August 5, 1998, that it would no longer cooperate with UNSCOM, unless numerous changes were made, such as moving UNSCOM's headquarters out of New York and placing it under the control of an executive bureau composed of the P-5 members, which would be observed by an Iraqi member.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/e...the_brink/newsid_216000/216264.stm, February 28, 2001.

⁸⁵ Butler, 164, and United Nations S/1998/719.

The most amazing part of this crisis is that, in light of past confrontations, these recent events did not produce a tense crisis atmosphere. Perhaps indicating evidence of ‘sanctions fatigue’ and a desire to ‘see the light at the end of the tunnel’ in respect to the ‘Iraqi Problem,’ it took the Security Council over one month to produce a resolution in response to the Iraqi statements that unequivocally demonstrated a violation of the MOU reached with Annan. Although Resolution 1154 stated that “any violation would have the severest consequences for Iraq,” Washington and London were both surprisingly quiet.

Whether frustrated over past attempts to build support for a military strike, or concentrating more fully on the pressing issue of attempting to politically resurrect himself from admitting to a previously denied “relationship with Ms. Lewinsky that was not appropriate,”⁸⁶ it appears that Clinton had taken a new approach to dealing with Iraqi intransigence. Working secretly with Britain and Turkey, the State Department announced on September 17, 1998, that Iraqi opposition leaders, Massoud Barzani of KDP and Jalal Talabani of PUK “were jointly committed to working against Hussein,”⁸⁷ in spite of their past history of attacking each other and Barzani’s former 1996 alliance with Hussein that enabled the Republican Guards to drive the PUK out of Irbil. Also, for undetermined reasons, Iran closed Iraqi access to the Shatt Al-Arab waterway, Iraq’s sole deepwater access to the Gulf, which remained jointly controlled by both countries following the Iran-Iraq War and is persistently a source of contention between these two rivals.⁸⁸ This resulted in the lowest level of Iraqi oil smuggling in two years which

⁸⁶ Papers of the Presidents, Clinton 1998, Book II, 1930.

⁸⁷ http://secretary.state.gov/www/statement_1998.html, February 18, 2001.

⁸⁸ Papers of the Presidents, Clinton, 1998, Book II, 1988.

limited Iraq's illicit income, perhaps applying pressure on Hussein to either resume cooperation with UNSCOM or bring about yet another crisis.

Another factor now reappeared which had lain dormant since February. By launching cruise missiles at Afghanistan and Sudan in response to the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, four days after disclosing his Lewinsky affair, Clinton's actions were seized upon by the U.S. and world media. This scenario of events was likened to that year's movie, Wag the Dog, in which a U.S. president used military action in response to a self-fabricated foreign crisis solely to bolster his domestic approval ratings. While this was promptly denied by the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shelton, it undoubtedly figured into the calculations of an embattled and beleaguered U.S. President in forming crisis management decisions.⁸⁹

Although in regards to UNSCOM and the IAEA, Iraq had previously agreed to "unrestricted freedom of entry and exit without delay or hindrance of personnel,... unrestricted freedom of movement without advance notice within Iraq of the personnel of the Special Commission,... the right to unimpeded access to any site or facility for on-site inspection,... the right to request, receive, examine and copy any record, data or information or examine, retain, move or photograph, including videotape, any item relevant to the Special Commission's activities and conduct interviews,... the right to designate any site whatsoever for observation, inspection or other monitoring activity," it continued to link further UNSCOM activities to its demands for special concessions.⁹⁰ When Resolution 1194 was adopted unanimously on September 9, 1998, it condemned

⁸⁹ Washington Post, August 24, 1998, p. A-13.

⁹⁰ <http://www.un.org/Depts/unscom.htm>, March 6, 2001.

Iraq's decision to cease complying with UNSCOM's disarmament activities, but declared a "readiness to consider, in a comprehensive review, Iraq's compliance with its obligations under all relevant resolutions once Iraq ha[d] rescinded its above-mentioned decision and demonstrated... full cooperation." It further "welcom[ed] the proposal of the Secretary-General for such a comprehensive review and invit[ed him] to provide his views." Not only had Iraqi obstinacy limited UNSCOM's unrestricted ability to inspect, but, it now expanded its scope by involving the Security Council in matters which had previously been assigned to UNSCOM, the IAEA and the Iraq-Kuwaiti Compensation Commission. Previously these committees provided reports to the Security Council. Now this political body would examine all aspects of the issues which it had previously decided would best be achieved by establishing special commissions composed of civil servants with pertinent technical expertise.

The situation was further complicated by issues of collusion and intelligence which surfaced following the resignation of UNSCOM's Chief Inspector for its Concealment Unit, Scott Ritter. Frustrated by what he termed "a surrender to the Iraqi leadership that has succeeded in thwarting the stated will of the United Nations" and by "the Security Council and the Secretary-General, backed at least implicitly by the United States... seek[ing] a 'diplomatic' alternative to inspection-driven confrontation with Iraq," he declared that "the illusion of arms control is more dangerous than no arms control at all," and began a series of media interviews and a testimony before a combined session of the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committee.⁹¹ What emerged, chiefly from a Washington Post article the day after Ritter's resignation, were images of UNSCOM as

⁹¹ Ritter, 27.

having been hijacked for use as a tool of U.S. foreign policy and as an intelligence organization which routinely shared information with other nations opposed to Iraq, rather than an independent arms control organization. In desiring to expose the political restraints which he believed kept UNSCOM from being effective in order to galvanize world opinion through such claims and statements, such as that Iraqi possessed three nuclear devices which only required special nuclear material to become functional and that Iraq could fully resuscitate its WMD programs within six months without monitoring, Ritter merely answered the prayers of the Iraqi propaganda machine. Iraq's early attempts at portraying the U-2 as evidence of UNSCOM's collusion with U.S. intelligence agencies and its identification of targets for future air strikes had been ineffective due to their lack of credibility. Although having very different motives than Iraq, Ritter effectively prepared an American and Western European audience to fertilely receive future Iraqi accusations in a manner which Iraq could never replicate by infusing such claims with the credibility of having been voiced by a former UNSCOM member and U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence officer.

Just how successful Iraq had been was demonstrated on October 5, 1998, when Annan revealed his recommendation for a comprehensive review which cemented the shifting of the onus of verification from Iraq to UNSCOM by stating that UNSCOM would be required to "confirm on the basis of evidence the validity of any allegations of non-compliance by Iraq with regard to section C of resolution 687," which pertained to Iraq's agreement to declare and cease its WMD programs.⁹² Annan had replaced his tone of being offended by Iraqi non-compliance, which he had voiced during March in response

⁹² Butler, 176.

to Aziz's suggestion that their agreement of February 22 was actually less inclusive than the MOU, with a tacit acceptance of it. As Presidency of the Security Council had rotated to Sir Jeremy Greenstock of the U.K., the U.S. and U.K. were able to counter efforts by France, Russia and China to adopt Annan's proposal, which led to a compromise which did not directly call for a shifting of the onus.⁹³

An Iraq intensely focused on this crisis then attempted to capitalize on any potential for shifting the onus. This was done in New York by circumventing UNSCOM's technical experts and directly inundating the much more potentially receptive diplomats on the Security Council, who were largely ignorant of the technical aspects of arms control and its verification, and therefore susceptible to viewing the shear amount of Iraqi documents as proof of their compliance and sincerity.⁹⁴ Simultaneously, Clinton was focused on the upcoming Israeli-Palestinian Wye River Conference on October 15 – 23, and not wanting to press any issue on Iraq which could potentially undermine any tenuous Arab support which the Palestinian Liberation Organization's Chairman, Yassar Arafat, would need to sign a public document with Israel. By concluding Wye with an interim agreement, Clinton was now able to clear his agenda for a renewed focus on Iraq.

AIRCRAFT INBOUND

The crisis became hot again during the last few days of October with Butler's semiannual report to the Security Council. After declaring on October 27, his inability to verify Iraqi compliance on disarmament without cooperation and that French, Swiss and

⁹³ <http://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/oct98/iroc98.htm>, January 18, 2001.

⁹⁴ Butler, 178.

U.S. laboratories had confirmed the presence of degraded VX stabilizing agents on Iraqi projectile fragments, Iraq responded the next day by embarking on military exercises designed to enable “hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens to defend themselves.”⁹⁵ Two days later on October 31, 1998, Iraq declared that it would cease all cooperation, i.e. on going monitoring and verification, with UNSCOM until sanctions had been lifted, UNSCOM restructured and Butler replaced.⁹⁶

Washington’s first response to Hussein’s throwing down the glove occurred that same day when Clinton signed the Republican backed Iraqi Liberation Act of 1998. Although he cited that the bill reflected “congressional interests” and that Hussein’s actions indicated the only way to bring about compliance with Resolution 687 was through a new government in Baghdad, he stated that the “U.S. would continue to look to the Security Council for leadership on the WMD issue.”⁹⁷ Following the by now familiar pattern of secretarial visits to the Gulf and European allies, Clinton changed his tone on November 10, warning that Iraq could rebuild its weapons capability within months and that the U.S. had the authority to take military action under Resolution 687.⁹⁸ Annan then continued with his new line of thinking but attempted to deescalate the crises through a personal letter to Hussein and stating during a visit to Marrakech that Iraq’s decisions “saddened and burdened him,” but that he desired to “map out the remaining steps, provided Iraq cooperates... [to allow it] to see the light at the end of the tunnel.”⁹⁹

Following the UNSCOM withdrawal from Iraq on November 11, an ominous sign of

⁹⁵ http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/e...the_brink.htm, February 28, 2001.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Papers of the Presidents, Clinton, 1998, Book II, 1938

⁹⁸ http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/e...the_brink/newsid_216000/21624.stm, January 18, 2001.

⁹⁹ Butler, 189.

an impending U.S./U.K. air strike, Aziz replied to Annan on the 14th, stating in a letter that Iraq would "resume working with UNSCOM and the IAEA," and that "Iraq's intentions were not...to halt implementation of its obligations under section C of... 687," but to "end the suffering of the Iraqi people."¹⁰⁰ However, rather than being a capitulation, the reply included a nine point annex which listed Iraq demands on how the comprehensive review would be conducted. While such occurrences were beginning to seem normal in this redundant series of crises, what caught the world's attention occurred the next day on November 15, when President Clinton declared that U.S. aircraft had been inbound to Iraq to deliver a punishing strike when he received word of Aziz's letter. Next time, he promised, he would act "without further discussion or warning."¹⁰¹

Such a statement, combined with the Security Council having abandoned any consensus in ensuring that UNSCOM was able to pursue its mandate, effectively transferred the fate of Iraq receiving a military strike to the hands of Richard Butler.

At 5:00 P.M., Monday December 14, 1998, Butler forwarded his Security Council mandated report on the status of Iraqi compliance with UNSCOM in regards to the February MOU and Aziz's letter of November 14 to the Secretary-General, who circulated it to Security Council members the next day. After its circulation, Butler was invited to U.S. Ambassador Peter Burleigh's office, who recommended that UN personnel in Iraq be evacuated. Butler heeded his suggestion and had his personnel evacuate that night.¹⁰²

The next day, December 16, Butler had the floor at the Security Council to present his

¹⁰⁰ United Nations, S/1998/1078.

¹⁰¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/e...the_brink/newsid_216000/21624.stm, January 18, 2001.

¹⁰² Butler, 210. Note, CNN reported that the evacuation began on the 14th.

latest report. While he was responding to the Russian Ambassador Sergey V. Lavrov's, accusation of having lied in the report to provide the U.S. with justification for bombing a country which was only weeks away from being fully disarmed, Butler heard a commotion in the anteroom and Annan immediately left after a messenger had whispered something in his ear. As promised on November 15, U.S. and British warplanes and cruise missiles were striking Iraq without warning in response to continued non-compliance with UNSCOM.

AFTERMATH

In his remarks following British Prime Minister Tony Blair's earlier announcement of the DESERT FOX air strikes, Clinton identified two of his reasons for the timing of the operation. He hoped that by launching an attack the day after Butler issued his report of Iraqi non-compliance "without delay, diplomacy, or warning" as he had promised to do in November in the event of further Iraqi non-cooperation, he would deny "Saddam more time to disperse his forces and protect his weapons."¹⁰³ He also wanted to conduct the strikes prior to the beginning of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, that year occurring on December 19, in order not to "be profoundly offensive" and "damage our relations with Arab countries and the progress we have made in the Middle East."¹⁰⁴ But by acting without a UN resolution specific to the current situation condemning Iraqi non-compliance and actually initiating it during Butler's presentation, Clinton gave a new legitimacy to Iraq's claim that UNSCOM was merely a tool of the U.S.

¹⁰³ Papers of the Presidents, Clinton, 1998, Book II, 2183-4.

But rather than being viewed as a demonstration of U.S. resolve in an effort to ensure a stable Gulf region, Operation DESERT FOX and its aftermath gave Iraq several things which it had been seeking since 1991. Any potential international sympathy for Iraq which was fostered through its weakness as a strength policy, was fully exploited and strengthened due to pictures of bloodied civilians and a bomb in a U.S. aircraft carrier's hangar bay which had "Here's a Ramadan present for you Saddam," written on it.¹⁰⁵ The growth of such sentiment fueled Iraq's process of reintegration into the international community in a manner which Iraq could not do alone.

Just the opposite occurred to the U.S. While France, Egypt and the GCC states remained non-committal on DESERT FOX, China loudly denounced it and Russia backed up its condemnation with action. The *Kommersant* newspaper carried a headline stating that "Iraqi children are suffering for Clinton's love," the Duma postponed a scheduled vote on ratifying the START 2 Treaty and Russia recalled its ambassadors from both Washington and London.¹⁰⁶ In the Arab world, Palestinians who greeted Clinton with U.S. supplied American flags during his historic visit to Gaza days before DESERT FOX, now burned those same flags.¹⁰⁷

Bringing such tensions to the surface, DESERT FOX also sounded the death knell for UNSCOM. Iraq would no longer generate an international backlash by denying inspectors entry into Iraq. But what had a greater effect were articles in the *Washington Post*, *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* (European edition) which provided further details on UNSCOM's interaction with U.S. and foreign intelligence services, which

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.iraqaction.org>, September 27, 2000.

¹⁰⁶ http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/e...diplomacy/newsid_237000/237913.stm, January 18, 2001.

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1998/iraq>, October 13, 2000.

were accredited to unnamed, but well placed, sources. These flames of perception were fanned by statements from Scott Ritter, such as "what Butler did was allow the U.S. to take over," and Annan's spokesman in denying having any hard evidence of the U.S. using UNSCOM as an intelligence source but stating "we have our rumors."¹⁰⁸ When such claims were not immediately denounced throughout the U.S. government, any perceived remnants of UNSCOM objectivity withered.

Even if Clinton was able to predict such a backlash against the U.S., his past foreign policy and crisis management decisions virtually dictated that he had to either respond militarily to Iraqi non-compliance or else 'waffle' on, or change, his policy. In light of his precarious domestic political situation, Clinton was not able to admit that his Iraq policy was flawed. Previous crises had shown that debate in the UN would only produce a mild condemnation followed by further acquiescence to Iraqi demands to limit UNSCOM. As evidenced by his signing of the Iraqi Liberation Bill in October, Clinton could not afford to lose any political capital on an issue which was not vital to his effort to defeat an impending impeachment vote and possible Senate trial. Within this context of an extreme domestic political crisis, Clinton could have realized that "major foreign policy [decisions] not only require painful choices among external goals but are potentially divisive and may endanger a political leadership's continuation in power."¹⁰⁹ From this aspect, it is likely that he "engage[d] in 'defensive avoidance' by bolstering the preferred course of action, exaggerating its benefits and denying its risks," in formulating the policy that resulted in authorizing DESERT FOX.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ David Malone, "Goodbye UNSCOM," Security Dialogue (1999) vol 30(4): 399-401.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Ned Lebow, Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1981) 18.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

On the other hand, using military force would show his resolve in fulfilling his previous threats to use force, prevent Republicans from using any perceived indecisiveness as a political issue and possibly generate some political support, less the Wag the Dog-effect, which previous uses of force against Iraq had generated. While the role of any possible domestic political consideration in authorizing DESERT FOX, which was immediately denied by Clinton, will remain speculative, the fact remains that although he was impeached, he did survive his Senate trial. If a possible political gamble was taken, it had paid off.

THE BENEFITS AND CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGING CRISIS

In adapting to an evolving situation, knowing his adversary and being able to change his strategy during a protracted diplomatic confrontation, Hussein was able to scuttle UN efforts to remove his WMD capability, solidify his domestic position, generate increased international sympathy and consensus to remove sanctions, and embark on a course of re-establishing himself as a member of the international community. In using force, Clinton prevented himself from being portrayed as a modern day Neville Chamberlain. But, through a misunderstanding of the limitations on applicability of coercive diplomacy and failing to implement it correctly, he also prevented himself from being viewed in Churchillian terms as having stood up to a dictator willing to use force and WMDs to pursue his personal and regional ambitions.

Primarily, coercive diplomacy is a limited tool of crisis management which, by its definition, is only designed to produce a limited, not total, political goal. History has

shown that only domestic movements, which extend from unrest to open rebellion and may or may not be accompanied by foreign support, or a successful invasion by a foreign army, can remove a political leader and change an entire system of government. Whereas statements from President Bush to the Iraqi people in 1991 and President Clinton's post-DESERT FOX comments indicate their hope of an internal Iraq movement ousting Hussein, both Presidents pursued coercive diplomatic efforts, but within the overarching strategic framework of allowing it to foster an environment where Iraqi dissidents would hopefully be able to effect change. When Hussein survived the violent post-DESERT STORM unrest in 1991 and successfully revitalized himself in 1996, it became apparent that a U.S overt pursuit of a limited goal, in conjunction with efforts by domestic Iraqi opposition movements, was unable to successfully bring about a change in the Iraqi government. Continued U.S. reliance on a tool designed to bring about a 'limited' change would not produce the desired 'total' results.

Foreign coercion by itself is insufficient to force a dictator to abdicate. This misapplication of a limited policy with which the Iraqi government had shown a tenacious effort to not submit to for over seven years, should have been apparent to U.S. leaders in 1996. This failure to be able to achieve success then went on to directly manifest itself during each of the 1997-98 UNSCOM crises, which left the administration vulnerable to charges of pursuing a policy without a realistic termination. Hussein would never relinquish his UN prohibited arsenal which precluded UNSCOM from completing its investigative work which was just one prerequisite for the U.S. to concur with the lifting of economic sanctions. The existence of this circular logic infused U.S. policy

with an air of aimlessness and, therefore, exposed exploitable fissures within its very foundation.

Not only did the U.S. continue to pursue the flawed strategic choice of a limited tool to achieve a result which Hussein's efforts had shown could only be brought about through a change of governments, which Secretary Albright as much as admitted to in her Georgetown speech of 1997, it then incorrectly applied its chosen tool. As previously identified, a successful application of coercive diplomacy contains the four elements of: (1) making a demand to your opponent, (2) creating a sense of urgency to comply with your demand, (3) threatening a potent and credible punishment to your opponent for non-compliance, and (4) offering positive inducements for compellence.

As illustrated by the U.S. National Security Strategy, Albright's speech, numerous remarks to the press during these crises, and efforts of the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, there can be little doubt that Iraq was aware of U.S. insistence that it fully cooperate with UNSCOM. Satisfying this requirement, the U.S. did create a sense of urgency by insisting that it would respond to non-compliance "at a time and place of its choosing."¹¹¹ This sense of urgency was highlighted, and part of the third requirement met, by increasing U.S. armed forces in the region, specifically keeping two U.S. aircraft carriers in the Arabian Gulf, rather than one, and publicly moving U.S. Air Force B-52 bombers to Diego Garcia. This military escalation, coupled with the Clinton administration's two previous air attacks against Iraq and continuous overflights, i.e. Operations NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH, illustrated that the U.S. had the means to back up its demands through the use of air power. What was lacking was domestic and international

¹¹¹ Papers of the Presidents, Clinton, 1998, Book II, 1520.

political support in the form of a consensus favoring the use of force to ensure compliance. As Clinton was attempting to use the military to achieve a political result, the use of military force occurring in a vacuum induced by the lack of support for its use, stood little chance of success. This resulted in meeting the letter, but not the spirit, of the third requirement for successful coercive diplomacy. Hussein obviously recognized this vulnerability by abandoning his past, failed efforts at threatening to use force, and adopting a ‘strength as weakness’ policy of portraying himself as a victim of an unending U.S. conspiracy to hurt the people of Iraq and then using that portrayal to undermine past political support for using military force against Iraq to prevent future attacks, terminate UNSCOM’s investigative efforts and eventually remove sanctions.

Another aspect on the threatened use of force as part of this third step in effectively using coercive diplomacy can be deduced from Keith B. Payne’s requirements for effective deterrence in which he stated that “the person to be deterred must be informed of the threat, believe that the threat is at least plausible, and rationally weigh the potential ‘cost’ of the threat against the value of choosing to go ahead with the forbidden action.”¹¹² This definition dictates that in order to get someone to do something by issuing a threat, the threat you issue must credibly place something he values, more dearly than the action which you have demanded he stop, at a terrible risk. In order for this to be effective, the issuer of the threat must understand his opponent’s value hierarchy, in order to identify what he values and to what extent he values it. This would enable the issuer of the threat to determine “the cost [his opponent] will and will not be

¹¹² Keith B. Payne, Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 3.

prepared to accept in pursuit of [his] goals.”¹¹³ According to Gordon Craig and Alexander George, the failure to identify your opponent’s values and determine his value hierarchy “can result in the disintegration of even the best deterrence strategy.”¹¹⁴

Viewing Iraq as a dictatorship, examining Hussein’s past policies of subjecting his citizens to his own and foreign armed forces in order to achieve his personal goals, and, based on the cat and mouse game which Iraq has played with UNSCOM ever since that organization’s inception, it is reasonably objective to state that what Hussein values most are, not his economy, general infrastructure, international reputation and his citizens’ well being, but rather those things which enable him to maintain power. Rationality, to Hussein, is defending what keeps him empowered. Hussein himself has given validity to this belief by not allowing the suffering of his people under economic sanctions and air strikes to deter him from his policies.

The only influence outside of Iraq which has successfully forced a significant change in any of his policies has been the presence of a foreign army on Iraqi soil, e.g. Iran in 1988 and the Desert Storm Coalition in 1991, or threatening it, such as the U.S. buildup of ground forces in Kuwait during the October 1994 Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR, which resulted in Iraq formally recognizing her border with Kuwait.¹¹⁵ As indicated by his continued defiance of UNSCOM, Hussein must have agreed with then U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, when she stated in 1995 that the “price” of Hussein starving thousands of Iraqi children in the name of UN economic sanctions was

¹¹³ Ibid., 107.

¹¹⁴ Gordon Craig and Alexander George, Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 189.

¹¹⁵ Albright, March 26, 1996.

“worth it.”¹¹⁶ Thus, in failing to establish credibility over the use of force via a domestic or international consensus and, more importantly, in not being able to threaten something Hussein values more than his WMD program, or the WMDs himself, the Clinton administration failed to meet the third characteristic of coercive diplomacy.

But even if the U.S. had been able to generate a decisive domestic and international consensus for using force to threaten a military action to remove Hussein’s WMD capability, such a threat would still be ineffective for one main reason: the U.S. had previously indicated that airpower was unable to eliminate a clandestine WMD effort. Secretary Cohen himself illustrated this point when he described the amount of a chemical agent that Iraq had previously produced and weaponized, which could fit into a five pound bag of sugar, as being enough to kill all the inhabitants of Washington, D.C.¹¹⁷ But, an acceptance of this statement calls into doubt the ability to destroy all, or even part, of such small and easily hidden items via any effort short of a nationwide carpet bombing or nuclear campaign. This self-evident deduction from a statement by the Secretary of Defense, reduced the effectiveness of the U.S. to threaten airpower as a means to compel Hussein. Viewing Cohen’s utilization of this statement as a reason to unequivocally back UNSCOM, it was then contradicted by Clinton when he proclaimed DESERT FOX a success. These conflicting comments further helped undermine U.S. policy by questioning the rationale behind its basis.

Without UNSCOM, or its successor, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), being allowed entry to Iraq, the true effectiveness of DESERT FOX in reducing Iraq’s WMD capability will remain speculative; however,

¹¹⁶ Cockburn, 263.

¹¹⁷ New York Times, February 22, 1998, section 4, 1.

the effectiveness of past military actions reveals that any success will have been partial and temporary. While many of Ritter's claims have been disputed by diplomats and other weapons experts, notably Butler, one area which remains largely undisputed, and one in which Ritter's disarmament and intelligence experience inspecting Soviet compliance on the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, "develop[ing] specific techniques for locating and destroying SCUD missiles" on General Schwarzkopf's staff during DESERT STORM and his almost seven years with UNSCOM, make him uniquely qualified to state, is what physical size any Iraqi WMD remnant capabilities would occupy. In the Appendix to his book, Endgame, Ritter lists "fifteen to twenty trucks" as being sufficient to contain "the two [unaccounted] for chemical production lines," that a chemical "filling plant could be carried in one to four standard metallic shipping (ISO) containers," and that the "supporting documentation required for a covert CW [chemical warfare] program.... could be concealed in a half-dozen or so metal footlockers, easily transported in one light truck, or the trunks of a few Mercedes sedans."¹¹⁸ The weapons themselves, less their documentation and production apparatus, could easily be hidden or placed within vehicles hidden during the day and "moved at night" which "would frustrate military target planners in establishing sites for selective, pinpoint air strikes."¹¹⁹ He continues with specific details on biological, nuclear and ballistic missile efforts, summarizing that they could be contained in fewer than ten trucks, three to five vehicles and ten to fifteen footlockers, and thirteen to nineteen trucks, respectively.¹²⁰ Ritter then accurately concludes that the inability to precisely locate all such equipment would

¹¹⁸ Ritter, 218-9.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 219.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 219-224. Note, this does not include producing or enriching fissile material, which would require a large fixed site with a large requirement for electricity.

require "the military... to strike in an indiscriminate fashion, [which is] something it has been loath to do."¹²¹

One of the factors from which Ritter drew his conclusions was the inability of coalition forces to destroy mobile SCUD launchers during DESERT STORM despite hundreds of sorties dedicated to doing just that. Based upon his 1986 training as a U.S. Marine Corps intelligence officer, Ritter claims that from 1982 through 1985 the Soviet KGB provided the Iraqi military and civilian intelligence services, the *Istachbarat* and *Mukhabarat*, respectively, with:

"instruction on strategic camouflage, concealment, and deception operations that were designed to safeguard Iraq's ... strategic industrial programs. The KGB brought with it a wealth of information about the strategic reconnaissance capabilities of the Western world, especially those of the United States. Iraqis were schooled in how to situate industrial sites to minimize their vulnerability to air attack, and how to reduce identifiable features (from the air) of each facility through deception and practical measures such as shielding heat sources.

More important, the Iraqis were taught the value of early warning and evacuation of a site subject to air attack. In addition new facilities were designed to absorb the destructive power of a bomb, making extensive use of "blow-away" walls that left the frame of a structure relatively intact, allowing for speedy reconstruction."¹²²

The Royal Air Force's experience during Iraq's years as a British mandate also confirm the transient nature of solely relying upon airpower after a successful ground offensive. Concerned with the costs of maintaining a large standing army in Iraq after terminating a post-World War I uprising at a cost of 40 million pounds and 450 British soldiers killed, the British decided at the Cairo Conference of 1921 to rely on airpower. Using three bases to conduct retaliatory raids on villages and launch incendiary attacks

¹²¹ Ibid., 219.

¹²² Ibid, 75.

on agriculture, the British were able to preempt any large-scale revolts. This success was proved to be short-lived, when in May 1941, the British had to use their own troops and the Trans-Jordanian Arab Legion, led by former British officer, John Glubb, to maintain their hold on the country after the Iraqi army had surrounded a British air base in response to the British expanding their naval facility at Basra without consulting the pro-Axis government of Rashid Ali.¹²³

The combined weight of all of these arguments places a heavy strain on the credibility of being able to threaten realistically, or use, precision airpower by itself, as a means of disarmament.

The final characteristic of coercive diplomacy is offering a positive inducement for complying with the issued threat. For Iraq, compliance not just on UNSCOM, but also all of the other factors as enunciated by the U.S. National Security Strategy and Secretary of State Albright, would bring about “Iraq’s reintegration into the international community.”¹²⁴ While Iraq’s Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, indicated that this reintegration was one of Iraq’s goals by repeatedly suggesting to Richard Butler that “you have one single duty to perform: to return to New York, declare that Iraq is disarmed, and recommend that the Security Council proceed with the necessary steps to lift sanctions,”¹²⁵ it was definitely sought only on Iraqi terms. Using Hussein’s value hierarchy, as indicated by his past actions, kowtowing to U.S. pressure in order to rejoin the international community was not too high on his list.

Just as Hussein seemed to have been concerned with the political consequences which

¹²³ William L. Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East, 2nd ed (Boulder: Westview, 2000) 201-9.

¹²⁴ A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 1997

¹²⁵ Butler, 172.

would result from taking an action which was counter to his traditional policies, Clinton was also constrained from offering Hussein any “carrots” for partial compliance. This inability resulted from using the limited tool of coercive diplomacy to achieve a result which the opponent viewed as total. But Clinton was effectively precluded from pursuing a limited objective against Hussein as the preceding Bush administration had referred to him as "the bully, the dictator, the brutal merchant of death."¹²⁶ Just as Reagan’s ‘no negotiation with terrorists’ policy had suffered in light of the Iran-Contra Affair, Clinton could be assured of paying a heavy political price if he was seen to be appeasing a Hitler-like dictator. By only offering Hussein the ability to rejoin the international community on terms against his liking, the only concept of a carrot was to be found in the removal of a big stick, namely, not striking Iraq. Similar to the Clinton administration’s failure to threaten anything which Hussein valued more than his WMD program, the administration purposely failed to provide Hussein with a carrot, or at a minimum, a face-saving way out of the ongoing crisis. The results of this self-constructed box of U.S. policy were foreseen by Alexander George when he wrote that “if such [coercive] threats lead the opponent to conclude that the demands made on him are rigid and nonnegotiable, he may decide that a mutually acceptable agreement to resolve the crisis is impossible and feel that he must... resort to coercive threats of his own.”¹²⁷

While the above arguments depict a misunderstanding and misapplication of coercive diplomacy, it is in its misunderstanding and the failure to offer an incentive for cooperation that a larger issue is revealed, that of a policy-strategy incoherence. Even

¹²⁶ Papers of the Presidents, Bush, 1992, Book II, 1184.

¹²⁷ George, Avoiding War, 557.

though the 1996-98 public U.S. national security strategies did not directly call for removing Hussein from power, remarks from both the Bush and Clinton administrations sent mixed signals as to what real U.S. intentions were. Although remarks citing the U.S. preference for Hussein to be removed from power, such as Secretary Albright's at Georgetown University in 1997 when she stated that such action was a prerequisite for lifting sanctions, these were typically later qualified by a spokesman as being merely realistic opinions that only a change in governments could bring about compliance with Resolution 687 and not any indication that the U.S. would not uphold its responsibility to lift sanctions if Hussein fulfilled UN requirements.¹²⁸ But the effect of these widely broadcast statements, when combined with vilifying rhetoric, past military actions, approval of the Iraqi Liberation Bill and rumors of CIA efforts in Iraq, provided Hussein, the international community and U.S. allies alike, with sufficient reason to question the stated aims of U.S. policy. "Once conceived, these images," in this case of the U.S. as being callous to Iraqi suffering, desiring to maintain sanctions unless Hussein was removed and eager to use air strikes which were not directly authorized or uniformly supported by the UN, would "be difficult to change. Even when a crisis [was] resolved without open hostilities, the image remain[ed]."¹²⁹

It was this very image of the U.S. that Hussein was able to exploit in order to reduce crucial Arab, French, Russian and Chinese support for UNSCOM. By defeating coup attempt after coup attempt and hindering UNSCOM efforts continuously since its inception, Hussein portrayed to the world an image of a leader who would be around for

¹²⁸ Butler, 50.

¹²⁹ Phil Williams, Crisis Management: Confrontation and Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age, (New York: Wiley, 1972), 13.

awhile and was willing to give up a significant portion, but not all, of his WMD capabilities. This reality would dictate that UNSCOM would never be able to fulfill its mandate and sanctions would then last in perpetuity. This lack of an endgame or 'light at the end of the tunnel' brought about by Hussein's ability to protract his struggle against UNSCOM and the inability of a limited strategy to produce results that would be acceptable to the U.S., meant that Iraq would permanently remain an isolated state subject to periodic western military action. The inability of the U.S. to garner international support for its policy throughout 1997-98, indicate that such a perpetual standoff without the likelihood of a near-term solution acceptable to both the U.S. and Iraq, or being able to affect change in Iraq, was untenable throughout the majority of the Arab world and viewed as unwise by three of the P-5 nations.

The last fault to be examined in Clinton's UNSCOM crisis management is that of maintaining close political control of its implementation.¹³⁰ What had evolved over the seven years of UNSCOM's existence was the unique situation of two P-5 member nations clamoring to use force in order to compel a member nation to comply with a UN Resolution that the other three P-5 nations no longer believed could be realistically implemented. By measuring the need to escalate or deescalate its crisis management responses in terms of a UN official report on Iraqi compliance, the Clinton administration effectively relinquished a portion of its crisis management ability.

Having won the Cold War and in being the only remaining superpower, the U.S. occupied a unique role in the early 1990's at a UN which was increasingly becoming a significant player in global politics. With the demise of the Soviet Union and its familiar

¹³⁰ Lebow, 27.

Security Council *nyet*, the liberation of Kuwait and the meaningful sense of accomplishment which accompanied the first phase of UN operations in Somalia in early 1993, a new era of UN cooperation and significance was emerging. And with Bush's unilateral easing of the U.S. nuclear posture, the Madrid Conference on the Middle East and the signing of START II, the U.S. seemed to be using its unique stature to champion a new sense of global cooperation.

This optimism however soon reached its zenith when the Clinton administration used Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali as a mission creep scapegoat for the 18 U.S. soldiers who were killed in Mogadishu, and then blocked his nomination for a second term. U.S. authority, and its ability to form a consensus, further declined as its UN arrears increased. By blocking nominations, dictating preconditions on paying its bill and then explaining such actions by declaring simply that any international misunderstanding of U.S. positions was due to the fact that "we see further," the U.S. painted itself as wanting to have its cake and eat it, too.¹³¹ Such an image was further developed by the U.S. position on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, by not attending the Ottawa Convention on Banning Landmines and in becoming vulnerable to charges of employing a Middle Eastern double standard by insisting that Iraq comply fully with all of its UN mandated obligations, but not pressing its ally Israel on a speculative nuclear program, or the Netanyahu government's inability to punctually implement the obligations it assumed at Oslo.

Within this growing context of U.S. isolation at the UN, reliance upon a body which reported to the Security Council, as a crucial element in formulating crisis management decisions, was unwise.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

In 1999, Richard Butler announced that he would not seek another term as UNSCOM's Executive Chairman. When his term expired, he was not replaced and UNSCOM lapsed into non-existence, only to be replaced by its successor UN organization authorized under Resolution 1284, UNMOVIC. It, too, has been denied access to Iraq ever since its first attempt in July 2000.

UNSCOM's inability to completely fulfill its mandate does not relegate it to having been a complete failure. By destroying thousands of WMD ordnance items, establishing a nearly complete knowledge of nuclear developments and accounting for all but two mobile missile launchers, UNSCOM was able to achieve a much more accurate and complete accounting for and destruction of Iraqi WMD programs and capabilities, than any previous attempts to do so by intelligence services and coalition forces.¹³² This success, when viewed in the context of ever-present Iraqi obstinance and an increasing amount of erosion for UNSCOM's independence and mandate, is quite an achievement. Previous disarmament efforts and nuclear proliferation inspections which were agreed to, not dictated to as part of a ceasefire following a humiliating military defeat, by host nations, such as U.S. inspections of Israeli nuclear facilities during the 1960's, IAEA inspections in North Korea and START I, have all encountered difficulties ranging from questions of naïve complicity on the part of inspectors to minor indications of items not

¹³¹ Malone, 393-411.

¹³² Ritter, 197.

having been fully disclosed.¹³³ The only type of disarmament effort whose effectiveness has been widely acknowledged is by militarily occupying a country and then conducting its disarmament, such as the Romans did at Carthage following the Punic Wars and the U.S. denazification, deindustrialization and demilitarization during and immediately following World War II; however, such an extensive effort has and can only feasibly occur after a total war effort.

Rather than indicating the futility of conducting a disarmament effort based on the UNSCOM model in the future, UNSCOM's accomplishments, and ultimately its failure, exemplify to just what extent an independent disarmament organization composed of technical experts with proven experience can, and cannot, accomplish their mandate during periods of strong multilateral political support and also during periods of international hampering and scrutiny. As indicated by UNSCOM's accomplishments, a body of technical experts can achieve success to a large extent if the political leadership, which authorized such an effort, remains committed to supporting the means chosen by such technical experts consistent with achieving its mandate. If these experts decide that additional means or expansion of current efforts are required to fulfill its mandate, then the political leadership would need to authorize such a change prior to its implementation. While no formula can guarantee success, this method of ensuring continued political support for a technical effort offers the greatest chance for preventing situations which would leave the technical experts vulnerable to charges of self-implementing politically motivated efforts or changing the scope or nature of its mandate.

But what can be done to address Iraq's UN commitments, especially part C of Resolution 687? Not much without a political change in either Iraq or the ability of the

¹³³ John Connell, "Cooperative Threat Reduction," Defense Threat Reduction Agency, April 5, 2001.

U.S. to again establish an effective international consensus on how to approach the issue.

With Iraq increasingly emerging from its international isolation and pariah-status, as indicated by participating in the first Arab League Summit since 1991 during March 2001, and having further violated the UN economic embargo by re-establishing commercial air service between Baghdad and Amman, Jordan, and receiving French and Russian relief flights, it seems highly unlikely that Hussein would change his stance on meeting Iraq's previously agreed to UN obligations.

In having Hussein's recalcitrance being rewarded with the previously listed results, it seems that the only other way of realistically effecting a change in Iraqi policy would be to have a change of government, in the form of an assassination, coup d'etat or revolution. While the former two ideas are something which a violence prone dictator can never rule out, Hussein has obviously defeated any such attempts for over twenty-one years. Due to economic hardship and the oppressive rule of the *Ba'th* Party, the Iraqi people might seem susceptible to fostering rebellion; however, when Hussein appeared at his greatest weaknesses following the Gulf War, none of the opposition against him was able to demonstrate the means necessary to affect a revolution.¹³⁴

This policy of encouraging internal discontent in Iraq received new life in February 2001, when the Bush administration initiated steps to release the \$96 million authorized in the 1998 Iraqi Liberation Bill which had been withheld by the Clinton administration.¹³⁵ However, as evidenced by past events and previous commitments, the immediate and long-term success of such an effort remains doubtful.

¹³⁴ Cockburn, 29.

¹³⁵ Alan Sipress, "Iraqi Foes to Get Aid from U.S." Washington Post, February 2, 2001, A-1.

Of prime consideration is Iraq's lack of homogeneity. When modern Iraq was formed in 1921 in accordance with the Treaty of Sevres, which primarily reflected the interests of the European victors of World War I, it was composed of three former and distinct provinces, or *vilayas*, of the Ottoman Empire. The northern most *vilaya*, Mosul, was dominated by non-Arab Kurds who were mostly Sunni Muslim. The central *vilaya* of Baghdad was primarily composed of Sunni Arabs, with the souther *vilaya*, Basra, consisting of Shia Arabs. Having a nation composed of such distinct and largely separated religious and ethnic groups has presented a challenge to each of Iraq's modern rulers, from King Faisal to Hussein.¹³⁶ Whereas threatening to dissolve Iraq back into three distinct entities might well be effective in compelling Hussein, due to the concerns of other countries in the region over such a policy's ability to encourage Shia support for a desired Iranian expansion of its theocracy or their indigenous Kurds, who were promised semi-autonomous status in the Treaty of Sevres which was soon repudiated in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, from possibly forming an independent Kurdistan, the U.S. has agreed to "the territorial integrity of Iraq" in several different UN resolutions and its own national security strategy.¹³⁷ Past events, such as the bitter infighting between rival Kurdish movements and Iraq's Shia Arabs having shown more loyalty to fellow Arabs over fellow Shia who happened to be Persian, by largely supporting Hussein throughout the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War and not working directly with Iran during their 1991 rebellion in the post-DESERT STORM period of instability.¹³⁸

Another factor working against a successful coup is the size of the military force

¹³⁶ Baram, Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1-7.

¹³⁷ Cleveland, 161, 175.

¹³⁸ Clawson, 71-4.

which remains loyal to Hussein. This dictates that any effort to oust him would need to be either a large mass movement, which is unlikely with Iraq's religious, ethnic and tribal divisions, or be limited to a small group of assassins which would need to consist of at least one member of Hussein's most trusted inner core of confidants in order to determine his whereabouts but yet remain small enough to avoid being detected or infiltrated.¹³⁹ Such a small group, however, would be acting without broad based domestic support and could merely result in a change of dictators and not an effective change in governmental systems. For over twenty-one years, Hussein has used these odds in his favor and successfully thwarted all coup attempts.

Also, the long-term success of any government brought to power via overt or covert western backed assistance is doubtful. This is due to the difference in which Arabs and Western countries perceive legitimacy. Legitimacy for western governments is largely derived from compliance with an established view on the primacy of the rule of law that arose from the evolution of governments from divine right monarchies to modern constitution-based governments. To the Arabs, with a long and still practiced tradition of tribal authority, the legitimacy of a leader to rule is established personally by that leader. When the leader dies, so does the legitimacy previously established by his rule and his successor needs to establish legitimacy in his own right.¹⁴⁰ This idea of legitimacy is so enshrined in the Arab world, that it is at the very heart of the Islamic world's divide between its Sunni and Shia branches, which differ over the issue of whether or not the individuals recognized by the Sunni as the first three Islamic Caliphs, or leaders of the Islamic religion after the Prophet Mohammed's death in 632, were legitimately able to

¹³⁹ Ibid., 82-4.

¹⁴⁰ Dr. Leila Fawaz, Professor, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, March 28, 2001.

claim the right to rule, or if the Caliphate should have passed directly to Mohammed's son, Ali , seen by the Sunni as the fourth, but the Shia as the first, Caliph.

The bloodiness which occurred throughout Iraq following the British backed Prime Minister, Nuri al-Said, being dragged through the streets after a 1958 coup, or the Arab-wide frenzy which Gamal Nasser was able to inspire when he claimed in 1952 after ousting the British backed monarchy to be the first Egyptian to rule Egypt in thousands of years, serve as vivid reminders of the primacy of establishing individual legitimacy as a long-term basis for effective governing.¹⁴¹ With a history of bestowing legitimacy on individuals and not pieces of paper, any Arab government which came to power directly through western involvement, or eventually leaked information confirming suspicions of covert assistance, would be largely discredited and continuously vulnerable to charges of being tainted through its association with the West.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT

From a crisis management perspective, President Clinton followed the accepted practices of modern crisis management to the extent that he could during the actual days of crises, but it was his acceptance and undertaking of actions prior to the actual crises which limited his capabilities to accurately and adequately implement coercive diplomacy. With this view, both current and future crisis managers need to thoroughly review the pertinent past events, context, relevant issues and current situation framing a potential crisis issue or area, instead of waiting for a crisis to occur and then attempting to

¹⁴¹ Ibid., April 12, 2001.

respond with the available tools. Crisis managers need to help formulate, or at a minimum voice their concerns and input towards, policy, its resultant strategy and how any such plans being considered for implementation would help or hinder their nation in managing a crisis.

In the context of disarming a foreign nation's WMD arsenal and production capabilities through a multilateral effort from a U.S. perspective, individuals with proven practical experience and technical knowledge of: (1) WMD production, weaponization, storage, use, and disposal, (2) international disarmament, (3) the political and diplomatic aspects of forging, implementing and adapting multilateral coalitions and treaties, and (4) cultural, political and geographic expertise of the country in question and its fellow neighbors in the region, would have to address, within the framework of their respective fields, what can and cannot be done in order to achieve the overall strategic national security goals which they would need to be provided with . This bottom-up effort would also have to be accompanied by a top-down effort in order to determine any relevant domestic political benefits or liabilities and its consistency with other U.S. interests, policy and strategy. Then, all of these diverse elements would have to be reviewed and juxtaposed into a feasible, logical, consistent and self-supporting plan.

One of the conclusions to be drawn from using UNSCOM as a case study is the difficulty of relying on the UN. While widely supported UN efforts hold out the potential for achieving short-term internationally popular results, any effort at establishing a consensus can only come as the result of intense and on-going diplomatic give and take efforts. President Bush alluded to this effort in 1993 when he stated that:

“Leadership cannot be simply asserted or demanded. It must be demonstrated. Leadership requires formulating worthy goals, persuading others of their virtue, and contributing one’s share of the common effort and then some. Leadership takes time. It takes patience. It takes work.”¹⁴²

While the magnitude of work, which a successful multilateral effort requires, cannot be realistically reduced if success is honestly sought, its scope can be reduced by switching the pursuit of multilateral support for it from the diverse UN to a more specifically focused group of nations. The parallel of this approach was first seen during the Korean War, which was undertaken as a UN effort, but then continued in vitality and strength for almost now fifty years as a regional policy.

The UN, being based on a charter of universal principles, is vulnerable to having any of its policies or resolutions being undermined through a variety of methods ranging from a direct counter-proposal to indirectly not supporting a resolution’s chosen means of enforcement or through subterfuge and debilitating modifications. Such efforts can come from a multitude of varying political, economic, religious, ethnic and regional interests. By definition, an alliance or multilateral effort based on a regional policy or single effort significantly reduces this vulnerability by limiting the number of participants among whom cohesion would need to be maintained. Furthermore, basing such a partnership on a single issue, common need, or stated principles, like World War II’s Atlantic Charter, infuses the effort with a certain level of political cohesion.¹⁴³

In regards to Iraq, such a disarmament effort could focus on Iraq’s obligations as a signatory nation to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.¹⁴⁴ This aspect could be used to

¹⁴² Papers of the Presidents, Bush, 1992-93, Book II, 2254.

¹⁴³ Dr. Richard Shultz, Professor, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, April 16, 2001.

¹⁴⁴ Butler, 234-5.

undermine any allusions to a U.S. Middle Eastern nuclear double standard in reference to Israel's speculative nuclear capability. In order to be technically, economically and politically successful in removing an Arab country's WMD arsenal and capability, such a partnership would have to include the U.S. for the first two reasons, and several Arab nations, hopefully including all of the Damascus Declaration states, for economic, logistic and political reasons.¹⁴⁵ Participation by Saudi Arabia would be helpful in financing the operation and politically important as it would largely guarantee increased participation by the remaining GCC states, who could not only provide financial assistance but crucial logistic support in the region, which Saudi Arabia is typically loath to grant for religious reasons arising from its status as being the guardian of Islam's two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina. Egypt and Syria would be politically crucial in isolating Hussein and preempting his ability to rally the so-called 'Arab Street' to his cause through a call to prevent the 'Arab Nation' from becoming defiled through western efforts to oust him.

Another aspect which the U.S. would need to realize is that any policy which the U.S. pursues against the desires of an Arab government is liable to being discredited through verbal assaults on the U.S. as being the armorer and staunch ally of its arch nemesis, Israel. Comprehension of this belief can be assisted by drawing on the Gulf War experiences of a former U.S. Air Force Middle East Specialist who served extensively in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. At 3:03 AM on January 18, 1991, then-Captain Rick Francona was serving as a liaison officer in a joint command, control, communications and intelligence center (C3IC) with Saudi Arabian officers, when Iraq

¹⁴⁵ The Damascus Declaration states consist of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman.

launched five al-Husayn missiles at Israel. Those in the center were watching a CNN live report from Israel when they received word via U.S. sources about the Iraqi launch. After watching two missiles impact Tel Aviv, he wrote that:

To the shock of the Americans present... virtually every Saudi officer was on his feet applauding and cheering the Iraqi missile strike against Israel, many shouting “*Allahu akbar*” (God is great). It was an awkward moment, watching Iraqi missiles striking a country not involved in this conflict. However, my assumption about Israel’s lack of involvement in the conflict was faulty.

When I asked the Saudis why they were cheering an enemy attack, they described Israel as the greater enemy. When explained in Arabic, what they said makes much more sense than it does in English. The Saudis use the term “an enemy” (*‘adu*) when describing the Iraqis, but they added the definite article ‘the’ when describing the Israelis- “the enemy” (*al- ‘adu*). In Arabic context, this has a greater magnitude, is much a stronger statement, than the use of the word without the definite article. One of the senior Saudi officers explained that the Iraqi ‘situation’ was not nearly as grave or important as the overarching Israeli ‘issue.’ He said that if the Israelis were to retaliate against Iraq, the Saudis and other Arab countries in the coalition- Egypt, Syria, Morocco, the Gulf States, and so on- would stop fighting Iraq and join forces with Saddam to defeat (or attempt to defeat) the Israelis. After that was done, they would work out the lesser ‘internal’ problem with the Iraqis. After all, as the Arabs say, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”¹⁴⁶

Earlier in explaining this mindset, Francona had also referred to the Arab proverb “Me against my brother, me and my brothers against our cousins; me, my brothers, and our cousins against the outsiders.”¹⁴⁷ While resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict is probably not a realistic near-term option, realizing its centrality as an issue to all Arabs, which can easily be linked to other issues, is of critical importance in developing strategy and predicting its effectiveness.

If a multilateral approach is chosen to tackle a disarmament issue, such an alliance or

¹⁴⁶ Francona, 113-4.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 112.

consensus needs to be viewed as a constantly evolving relationship which needs to adapt and evolve along with the constant of political change. Taking an alliance as granted because a document has been signed will result in the progressive ineffectiveness of the multilateral effort. It will also force the countries which make such an assumption to be self-relegated to merely reacting to change, rather than maintaining group cohesion by demonstrating innovative leadership which addresses the concerns and interests of other members. By keeping focused on the pertinent issues as they develop, the coalition's leadership can recommend policy which meets not only its own goals, but also addresses those of its fellow members, without seeming like being a brunt effort to solely achieve a country's self-interest. Such a perception can easily lead to a fragmentation of unity due to the inability of member nations to portray domestically such an alliance as being in their national best interest.

APPLYING THE LESSON

Comparing the Clinton administration's stated strategic goals in regards to Iraq with their results at the end of the last UNSCOM crisis in December 1998, illustrates that the administration was merely able to carry out a threat and not actually to realize its goals. In failing to dominate the escalatory ladder, meet the four requirements of coercive diplomacy or implement a brilliant circumventing move, Clinton's legacy in terms of Iraq is bound to focus on the reoccurrence of numerous, similar crises which resulted in an ongoing stalemate which failed to achieve its goals or resolve the underlying conflict.

Inheriting such a policy poses an interesting challenge for the current Bush administration. Based on years of stagnant Middle East policy and the heavy-handed backing by the U.S. at Camp David II of Israel's offer, Bush faces an uphill challenge in attempting to portray the U.S. as being understanding of Arab concerns, which is crucial to the U.S. in re-establishing its effective leadership in Southwest Asia. Between comments referring to Hussein as "not being around in a few years" and a February 16, 2001 air strike on Iraqi anti-aircraft missile sites not solely within a no fly zone, contrasting with statements on "smart sanctions" as a policy option and freeing up \$96 million worth of U.S. aid to the Iraqi opposition, the current administration has shown mixed signals.¹⁴⁸ But, in viewing the air strike as a necessary measure to show resolve and safely continue enforcing the no-fly zones, coupled with the administration's displayed restraint in using domestically popular fiery anti-Hussein rhetoric and that Secretary of State Powell's first two foreign visits were to the UN and Southwest Asia, respectively, the U.S. could be attempting to display continuity in order to buy time while formulating a new strategy for Southwest Asian policy and crisis management. Such an effort could prove successful, but only if it provides a coherent policy and strategy combination which would enable President Bush to establish and maintain the requisite political cohesion to militarily enforce such a policy, if necessary, and effectively implement a successful crisis management strategy that would not be self-limiting.

¹⁴⁸ Boston Globe, December 17, 2001, A1.

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